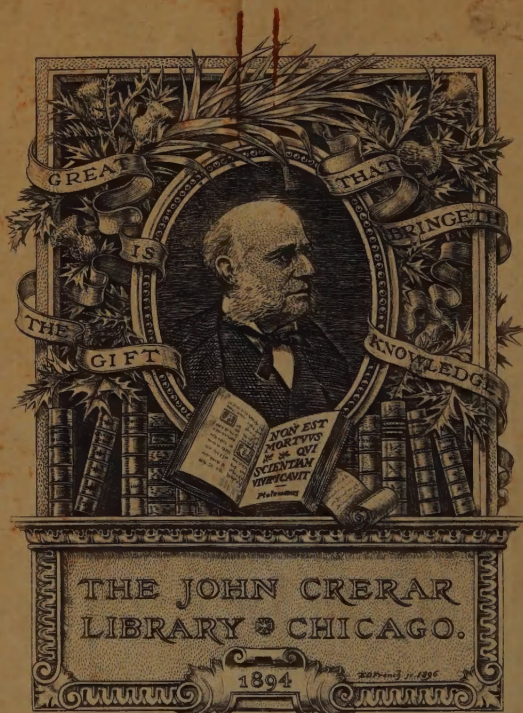


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AN
ENQUIRY

INTO THE
MORAL REGENERATION

OF
HUMAN NATURE;

WITH
OBSERVATIONS ON THE RELATION IT BEARS TO THE
SEVERAL DUTIES OF A

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY **GEORGE M'CANN,**
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden
wedge of Ophir.—ISAIAH xiii. 12.

γινώσκεις εαυτον.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN we make man the subject of our inquiry, in whatever light we view him, either physically or morally, he becomes an object of peculiar interest; and when, in the prosecution of these inquiries, we perceive the perfect adaptation of his numerous moral and physical properties, in the formation of one great whole, we are lost in the contemplation of the astonishing creative powers manifested in his formation, and exclaim with the psalmist, that "he is fearfully and wonderfully made!" Nor are these solemn aspirations lessened in the contemplation of him, even in his depraved state; we view him still great—though in ruins, and wonder that that great and beneficent Being who formed him, should deign to preserve in him the primitive stamp of his own divine nature; that he should vouchsafe his manifold kindnesses, in the continuation of his being, and preservation here, and in extending it to a future state, made glorious by his own external presence.

▪ When I consider the heavens which thou hast made, the sun, moon, and stars, which Thou hast ordained ; What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him ?" It is in the comparative ruin of man's moral greatness, and connexion with his Creator, that his present humiliating condition forces itself so powerfully upon us, that we see those rational faculties, so wisely ordained for his Maker's glory, and his own happiness, prostituted to purposes foreign to both ; yet, the very existence of these faculties, however they may be misapplied, justify every attempt to elucidate their capabilities, and to direct them to their primitive channel ; to shew that they may yet be productive of their great ends ; and that, in their due regulation, centers the moral duty we owe to God, our neighbour, or ourselves.

The magnitude and importance of an attempt of this kind, can only be estimated by anticipating the eternity of consequences to which man is liable. He does not live here for the mere gratification of sense ; his sensitive enjoyments were intended to be subordinate to the end of present peace and future glory. All these ennobling faculties were never intended to be confined to the probation of "threescore years and ten." Man is a being made for another state

of existence; and if the attention could be rivetted to this great truth—that humanity is eternal, as the nature from whence it derives its being; that our actions here, which consist in the proper appropriation of the several attributes of humanity, affect its eternal state and condition; that this appropriation depends upon a proper application of our reason, to the investigation of the matter, and of the extent of our powers in the mighty work; we would give God the glory, that we were yet in a land of hope; we would hasten to redeem the time, and wonder that so much had been lost in doing those things which hath neither the promise of the good things of this life, nor of that which is to come.

The heathen philosophers, who made man their principal study, discerned the distinguished importance of his being: although, without revelation, they saw not the superior excellence of his nature; yet they concluded that he was their most proper study. Hence, their celebrated motto, “Man, know thyself.” But with higher wonder may that man view his exalted situation in the scale of being, who understands, from the councils of heaven, that he is made capable of receiving and enjoying everlasting life; that after obedience in a restored humanity unto death, he shall partake a

divine nature, and sit down as a conqueror on the throne with Jesus, as he has overcome, and is sat down with his Father on his throne. The great mystery of godliness, (as the inspired apostle expresses it) "God manifested in the flesh," proves clearly, in our favoured day, that which excited astonishment in the exalted views of Solomon, and made him cry out, "*Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth !*"

The term *humanity* embraces more than a superficial observer would be led to imagine. It is a term comprehensive in itself, and embraces and connects all that is morally virtuous, with Christian principle. Its province includes one of the greatest creative works of infinite wisdom—the foundation of the covenant of grace; the great sacrifice of atonement; and, of a necessary consequence, every thing relating to our present and eternal welfare. One would imagine, that a subject so vast, and so comprehensive, would have long since exhausted the ingenuity of metaphysical research; but, strange to say, it has scarcely been touched upon by any, even by those who have spent their lives in the benevolent duties of regulating society, by either legal or religious compacts.

An indefinite and vague opinion, that the fall of

man destroyed his original nature, caused men to take for granted what was but partially true, and led him to exercise, in abstract and limited sectarian prejudices, virtues and qualities in themselves noble and humane; but unproductive of benefit, from their want of foundation in the true nature of things; from their not having found the way to the heart by that proper channel which natural views, and the language of nature, never fails to find, and from this being mixed up with their own contracted notions of establishing their individual views.

I was led to consider the subject from the simple enquiry of what man was—from the Scripture—and other accounts of him; what he is capable of in a moral point of view; and how far his present actions, habits of society, &c. are concerned in making him what he is. And this led me further to enquire, how far his moral nature was capable of improvement, and the relation his own exertions bore to his duties here. Whether or not that nature was bad in itself, or that we were daily contributing to make it so.

I next viewed it, as it appeared in the Son of God, and our Divine Redeemer; and the more I looked at it, the more I was convinced, that it was a neglected subject. I became at last resolv-

ed to submit my thoughts on it to the ordeal of public and general intelligence, with a view to excite enquiry, and to draw the attention more closely, to a matter with which we are so closely allied; not doubting but that new thoughts may arise, and society be benefited, by prosecuting a theme so interesting, that even "angels desire to look into it." I have viewed it abstractedly; nor have I to my knowledge allowed a single thought of private prejudice, to interfere with my design of general usefulness.

Like the principles of nature itself, it has its existence in the great original laws, by which the great whole was set in motion. It rises above the invention of man's theories, and extends its blessed effects to all nations. Like the vivifying principles of light, it reflects its divine influence upon the just and upon the unjust, unshackled by colour, clime, or human invention.

The primary point of importance in the subject of this enquiry, and which I mean to investigate, is, Whether we have sufficient Scripture authority for believing that the redemption which believers have by Christ Jesus, frees them, not only from the guilt of sin; but whether they have also a restoration of human nature in a state of sanctified purity?

I do not mean ■ state such as Adam had—of unsuffering innocence, in the garden : but whether we may, as believers, expect a nature in conformity to the law,—a nature to which the commands of God will not be grievous, and in which believers may both obey and suffer after the example of Christ. If they receive a restored humanity, we then find a rule for the regulation of morals, according to truth and the nature of things : and also, for detecting the deceptory arts of enthusiasm and superstition ; also a plain path of obedience for our feet, of universal application. Taking up the cross and following Christ will be our reasonable service ; while, without such a nature, we could not obey, and suffer with Christ ; for his example would be inimitable, and an attempt, in such a case, presumption.

Whether the nature of man be entirely or partially depraved, or whether he is restored by the washing away of sin, or a new creation, I do not at present dispute ; for no less than the power of God which spake the world into being, can either restore or create us anew. And the Scripture, in divine wisdom, speaks of the mighty work, by figures applicable to both methods of salvation. But what affects the question on this point, is, whether or

not human nature be restored ; for if human nature be restored in its identity, we have then a rule for judgment, and a key to much useful knowledge, in an embodied form, which will render the example of Christ expressive of divine wisdom, and our believing obedience full of comfort.

But if we have no Scripture ground to expect a restored humanity, salvation will constitute a new nature, but not a human one ; and therefore, unlike the nature in which Christ obeyed and suffered. By this some degree of dissimilitude would appear to exist between Christ and his brethren, whom it behoved him to be made like unto ; for it is said, that "*both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all one ; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*"

As many Scriptures border on the line of this inquiry, it becomes us reverently to enquire in the temple of the Lord, and wait at wisdom's posts, calling on him who hath promised to give to them that ask him : "for every one that asketh receiveth, and those that seek shall find, and to those who knock it shall be opened."

INTRODUCTION.

IN offering a few thoughts on the subject of this enquiry, I make no other apology, than the shortness of time, and the importance of the subject itself; hoping my readers will allow the propriety of every prudent attempt to disseminate principles in their tendency calculated and designed to remove antisocial errors and prejudice; by presenting to the mind such reasons and arguments, as may excite generous passions, kindle the love of moral virtues, and christian graces; thus stirring up those gifts of God within us, which he hath bestowed, in order to bless and tranquillize every enlightened and humanized being. Amid the variety of religious systems which abound in our day, we yet want (I presume) a centre of union, a consistent ground of reconciliation; a *desideratum* to the generous and liberal of all christian parties; a standard to which they may resort; a place where they can meet each other in peaceful freedom and mutual edification; I would say, genuine social christian pri-

vileges; where ■ benevolent and mutual right of free discussion will be not merely tolerated, but desired and allowed. Every man should prefer truth to a mere sectarian dogma; and regard genuine morals, arising from restored humanity, as the best external evidence of that religion whose voice proclaimed peace on earth, and good will to men. The promised time is approaching, when free investigation and candid inquiry will be more carefully attended to,—truth received on its own proper evidence,—and its friends learn to be more kind and forbearing. A time, when truth in the love of it, will be the only bond of christian union:—That happy time when men will beat their (party) swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when one sect will not strive to vex another, but rather, in the cause of truth, studiously strive who shall render themselves most agreeable to society, acting humanely in the spirit of christian love, and doing good to mankind; “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” “For our weapons of warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong-holds of sin.

And, if I may express myself freely, I would say, that a restored *human* nature is this desideratum. The human nature is the nature of man—the nature in which God created him—where shone the luminous rays of light and love, where reason blossomed, and where virtue smiled. In this nature man held communion with God: But alas! this

nature sin has defiled, and Satan has tempted. Yet, amazing love ! this nature God restores, Christ assumes, wears, washes, sanctifies, and redeems, with his own blood ; takes the prey from the terrible, and delivers the lawful captive. This human nature restored, and endowed with moral virtues and christian graces, becomes the seat of sympathy, affection, and reason. If man lived according to the design of God in his creation, society would be a blessing, and the increase of mankind an increase of social happiness and delight. Men were not made to be enemies to each other, but friends, brothers : for of one blood God made all men, that in that one blood, we should feel the sympathies of brotherhood, and live in love as the children of one indulgent parent, Eph. v. 1.

The restoration of *human* nature is essential to moral virtues, to Christian graces, to social duties : so necessary to our felicity, that society cannot be happy without it ; nor can any profession of religion, however strict, zealous, or superstitious, be substituted in the stead of it. The reason is evident, for without a restored human nature, we can neither have clear reason, nor sound minds ; without reason we cannot have the joys of reflection ; nor the joys of reason, without human sympathy : besides, the joys of either separate, are unsatisfying and transient, therefore inadequate to the happiness of a rational nature : Hence, the enthusiast who soars, and the superstitious who sink in their devo-

tions, worshipping without the reason of the mind, are equally distant from the true and rational happiness of a restored nature. The enthusiast may have an elevated fancy, and highly excited feelings of sensitive devotion, and the superstitious devotee may indulge in the melancholy pleasure of a gloomy sorrow, in which he may fancy himself atoning for past follies, by present mortifications, while God's word says to both, as unto the superstitious Jews, "who hath required these things at your hand?" The religion of Jesus is a reasonable service, and glorifies God as it benefits man: but what tends not to the rational happiness of man, receives no authority from God. Mistaken notions have wide extremes: Some place religion in feelings, others in reflection: the first fear reasoning as dangerous to a happy state of the mind; the latter consider mere feelings as the path-way to fanaticism; whereas, a restored state of human nature, most happily and temperately unite clear intelligence in the mind, with happy sensations in the nature; thereby perfecting a consistent and rational devotion.

It is to be feared, many view religion only as a system of right opinions, and decent ceremonies, where propriety of attendance is dictated by custom, and their fear towards God taught by the precepts of men. Such believe on the evidence of men's authority, rather than the force of divine convictions; these will devoutly present at God's altar, their

persons, gifts, and devotions, hoping to stand accepted with God on these accounts, and to obtain the name of charitable and religious amongst their neighbours.

While much is said about opinion merely, the depraved state of man's nature seems forgotten or neglected; that until these diseases of heart and nature are removed, our devotion will be only a form, and our happiness a shadow. Nor is this the whole evil; for connected with these, is the awful danger of imposing on the young and ignorant, a false impression of the religion of Jesus, exhibiting a cold, formal, lifeless attendance on the external part of religion, shewing at the same time real life, and love, and desires for the present world; what will the conclusion of young minds be, but that the world is the chief good, religion a cheat, and that those who set before them such an example, are either fools, or knaves?

We are taught by the voice of revelation, to put on the *new man*: but, in order to put on the new man, we must first put off the old. We must therefore, put off the old man and his deeds; for, should the old man and his deeds remain uncrucified, while we put on the new man by profession, this would be to make the motley figure, the christianity of many exhibit in the world. Christianity does not consist merely in name or notion; and although it is to be regarded by proper observances, yet no form can fully comprehend it. Men

have endeavoured to establish religion, by sentiments, by ceremony, and by laws, or rules without effect ; for if there had been a law which could have given life, “ Verily, (saith an apostle) righteousness would have been by the law,” Gal. iii. 21. We require a nature obedient to the law—one in conformity to it, one to whom the commandments of the pure law will not be grievous ; this is the human nature restored, washed in the laver of regeneration. For, in order to approach God aright, the heart must be “ sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water.”

Man being a weak creature, unable, in this present state, to know much of abstracted excellence, the wise Creator has embodied his love and wisdom in emblems. The human nature itself is a dark body, where God hides much of his great designs ; these will unfold themselves, to the glory of God, and the happiness of man, in the council of his revolving providences. Much of the mystery of love is reserved for the practice of duty ; the disobedient, therefore, can never know, in that state, the blessings of religion, as they are realized in substance rather than shadow, and in practice rather than theory, “ Hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes,” Matt. xi. 25.

If we admit a legitimate connexion between natural and revealed religion, it will be necessary to admit the propriety of restoration in human nature,—as a soil for the seed of moral virtues,—as a ground

for the foot of *Jacob's ladder* to rest on, that the ascent to heaven may have a connection with truth and nature, according to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many christians discover the obligations of natural religion, and the propriety of moral virtue, who have not perhaps discerned the close union and exact harmony which subsist between moral virtues, and christian graces.

Sin disturbs the natural union between the soul and the body; but when the soul is cleansed from sin, there is a fellowship between the soul and Christ, and between Christ and God; to preserve this union, while man is in his probationary state, requires faith in the Son of God, and obedience evidenced by the putting away of sin. Some have entertained strange prejudices against human nature, and speak of it as they would of the carnal, making no difference; forgetting that Jesus Christ wore it; this is certainly an error, and the root of many errors, very dangerous in the practice of duty. When our Lord appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, it was sin only; there was no necessity to destroy human nature with the work of the devil: all sin is said to be of the devil, and those who love and practise sin are said to be of their father the devil, while his works they do, but no longer. *Human* nature is God's work, his creation, and before defilement with sin, was very good; and when created anew in Christ Jesus, is again very good; no man hateth his own flesh with any propriety of

reason; the obedience and sufferings of our Lord was in that body prepared for him, and that body was the human nature, and in this he left us an example that we should follow his steps. It "be-hoved Christ," saith the apostle, to "be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18. He is the head, they are the members, this figure implies the same nature. But it is a truth declared plainly without any figure, that because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; for he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 14, 16. Flesh and blood dissolves no union between the merciful Redeemer and his followers. But the Lord Jesus disowns the least relationship with sin and wickedness. Sin is not the nature of man, but the disease and defilement of man's nature, nor is sin natural to man. As a physician from the heavens, Christ came to heal the worst disease of man, and to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In the days of gospel power, men were enjoined to put away their sins, calling upon the name of the Lord, Acts xxii. 16. In those happy days believers purified themselves in obeying the truth, 1 Pet. i. 22. We pray for those days of power a-

gain, when men will desire salvation, and be truly willing to put away their sins ; or, as saith the prophet, " be willing to be made clean," Jer. xiii. 27. Christianity is a new creation ; believers are the workmanship of God, "*created again in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them,*" Eph. ii. 10. " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. Whereas many, it is to be feared, cover with a covering, not of God's Spirit. But in the blessed change of which the gospel so fully speaks, the heart of stone is taken away, and the heart of flesh restored ; on this new heart God promises to write his laws, and with the blessings of a new covenant, to give a new nature, Heb. viii. 10. This new heart which the Lord has promised, will be susceptible of genuine feelings, pure friendship, living virtue, moral obligation, and christian love ; to use Solomon's fine figure, " A garden enclosed is my sister my spouse ; not like the garden of the sluggard, covered with thorns and briers ; but like a garden well watered ; or a field which the Lord hath blessed, Isa. lviii. 11. Gen. xxvii. 27. Such bring forth fruit to God's glory, not merely leaves of profession, but fruits of righteousness ; they love as brethren, " not in word only, but in deed and in truth." They possess a nature capable of God's original image, a nature which partakes of the kind and generous feelings of humanity.

Human nature, therefore, is man's proper nature

where he lives, thinks, and suffers; it is the province of thought, the centre of feeling, the subject of faith, and the happy seat of love and affection.

Can any say, therefore, with propriety, that when the God of love calls on his people to love him with all their hearts, and minds, and strength, that he is an hard master, reaping where he has not sown, or gathering where he has not strawed? Is it not rather an additional blessing to be authorised in the joyful privilege of bringing to his altar, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name? Heb. xiii. 15.

When the Jewish people, which God planted as a right vine, had continued to add sin to sin, perverting their ways, departing from the Rock from whence they were hewn, and corrupting themselves, until they had not the mark of his children; nevertheless still wished to be called sons of Abraham; but the Baptist, so far from calling them sons of Abraham, the friend of God, he denies them even the name of men; for they had changed their nature by sinful practices into the nature of poisonous animals; he therefore addresses them, not descendants of Abraham, but as descendants of the serpent, a generation of vipers, Matt. iii. 7. "Saying, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come," evidence a change of heart by the fruits of your lives, and call not Abraham your

father, unless your faith and fruits of faith resemble his. In vain do ye boast a pedigree derived from Abraham,—“For God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” Our Lord reproofs the same absurdity in the Jewish people, by telling them they were of their father the devil, while they did his works, and would not allow them a name which did not correspond with their nature. When Peter addresses the Jewish sanhedrim, he uses no flattering titles, but boldly declares them to be traitors—the betrayers and murderers of Jesus: likewise Paul, when sent to the heathen, it was to turn them from darkness, not to flatter them in it. Human nature implies the duty of obedience and suffering, and by many is reproached and stigmatised, either from the custom of others, or to make room for a favorite system; for systems seem to multiply like the altars of Israel, Hosea x. 1. Men shew a greater fondness for any system of notions, than for the practice of truth, both in the natural and moral world; men are averse to the plain path of duty, although blessings are connected with theory, and happiness with the practice,—“Blessed are ye if ye know these things; happy are ye if ye do them.”

The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Those who worship God are required to worship him in spirit and in truth. Can we do this while sin has dominion over us, while our hearts and natures are cor-

rupt, unrenewed, and unsanctified? Impossible: for his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness, Rom. vi. 16. God would not accept on his altar the polluted, the lame, or torn, in sacrifice, even under the law; we therefore cannot think that a less pure worship can be now acceptable to him in the brighter days of Gospel purity. Neither can we worship without the aids of the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession, according to the will of God: who promises the Holy Spirit as an abiding witness to his people, and they are to be holy in body, soul, and spirit, and our bodies to be temples for the Holy Spirit, and consequently to be kept holy; for he that defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy, 1 Cor. iii. 17.

True worshippers of Deity contemplate the glory and perfections of the God they worship; nor can they grow in his grace, receive his image, or obey his will, unless he is known to them in his character as a reconciled God and father. God is a God of love and mercy; but can the cruel, the contentious, the inhuman person, with such a temper of mind worship a God of compassion? Can the adulterer, whoremonger, or unclean person, worship, without repentance, a God of holiness and purity itself? Or can the proud, the vain, the scornful, the selfish and covetous, while they remain such, worship in the spirit of brotherly kindness and Gospel holiness, a God of justice, wisdom

and power, whose laws are impartial, and whose kingdom is everlasting? Impossible. The whole Jewish economy taught, in a manner minute and specific, not only the time and place, but way and manner; and in nothing were they more particular than in the ceremonial cleanness, and difference of the creatures which were to be offered to God in sacrifice; no bird nor beast except those which were clean, and even these were to be free from blemish—living sacrifices—not torn, nor lame, nor sick, Mal. i. 13. We learn that fine linen, white and clean, is the chosen emblem to represent the righteousness of the saints, Rev. xix. 8.: and under the law, the Israel of God, were forbidden, by a positive law, to wear a garment of different kinds mingled, as of linen and woollen, Lev. xix. 19. Deut. xxii. 11.; besides the curtains of the ark were of fine linen; the coat and mitre of Aaron the high priest, and the dresses for the other priests, were to be of linen, Exod. xxvi. 1. and xxviii 37, 39, 42. All the typical laws were full of meaning, and as a shadow of good things to come, the body being of Christ, yet the shadow will help the eye to see the sun, and the shadow of the law, as a schoolmaster brings us to Christ. If God was pleased, under the law, in his unsearchable wisdom, to be so minute in the outward kind and form of worship, will he, under a more glorious dispensation, be indifferent about the temper and spirit in which we worship Him? the law made nothing perfect, but

the bringing in of a better hope did. Will the unchangeable God appoint outward garments under the law, and care nothing for the garments which cover our spirits, in the purer worship of the latter day's glory? No truth is plainer taught from the Old Testament by precept, than those from the New in example: "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He came to fulfil the law, to be the light of its shadows, the substance of its emblems, and the life and fulfilment of all the promises; he not only taught the law, but lived in all its precepts and designs. Heaven's treasures of wisdom were expressed in precepts by him, and its goodness and love exemplified in practice; he not only taught his followers what was true, but shewed them how to live. And more, O wondrous love! he taught us how to die.

From the force of his example, I would just observe, and I think it very plainly revealed, and our Lord expresses it in word, saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, viz. any sinful desire of the old man, and take up his cross, and follow me." "To offer our bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," is both by injunction, and after the example of Christ, our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

Under the law, clean beasts, emblems of innocence, were appointed to be offered in sacrifice, such as oxen, heifers, lambs, and kids of the goats,

among the beasts; and among the birds, the pigeon and dove, &c. being clean and innocent creatures; for no ravenous creature could be offered, such ■ lions, bears, wolves, tygers, or apes, of beasts; nor eagles, kites, cormorants, &c. among the birds.

We have no ground to suppose, that under the more glorious dispensation of the gospel, where all the Israel of God are ■ royal priesthood, ■ chosen generation, a peculiar people, that any of them will be allowed to offer unclean sacrifices; neither indulged in the neglect of offerings. Every high priest among the Jews, was ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore, it is of necessity, that Jesus, the great High Priest, have somewhat also to offer, Heb. viii. 3. This is answered by the Son of God, when he cometh into the world, he saith, "Sacrifice and offering (such as were merely shadowy) thou wouldest not, but ■ body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. This body was the human nature, in which perfect obedience was to be offered; the law magnified by his obedience, and the penalty endured by his sufferings, and by both was the atonement made, and an example set before us, that we should follow his steps, not merely by profession, but really and truly; for his priests have also somewhat to offer, even their bodies a living sacrifice, and the fruit of their lips giving thanks to his name.

Can we, who now live in the latter days' glory, conceive that God will be pleased with worse than

Jewish sacrifices? Can God, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin, with the least allowance, accept sacrifices torn and lame, a form of outward devotion, with real selfishness in the heart, vainly attempting to serve God and mammon, professing to know God, and in works denying him? Drawing near him with our lips, and our hearts far from him? The word of God, under both law and gospel, requires that all men repent and believe the gospel: "*Cease to do evil, learn to do well.*" "Arise, why tarriest thou, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Not only the filthiness of the flesh, but of the spirit; inward and outward pollution, that ye may be a new lump, leavened with sincerity and truth. Can any thing be more clearly revealed, than the design of the coming of Christ, to finish transgression,—to make an end of sin, and bring in, (into the very soul,) an everlasting righteousness. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish," Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

This doctrine is not only agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, but productive of true morality, for if the tree is not made good, the fruit will not be good. None, I grant, can restore our fallen nature, but the Almighty Power which called the world

first into being; who spake and it was done: he gave commandment and order took place. But then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord; and there is a command from on high, "Let him that hath my word speak my word; for what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." A charge is brought against the Jewish prophets, which concern many of the present day: "*If they had, saith the Lord, stood in my counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings,*" Jer. xxiii. 22. Too often men have stood in their own council, the council of their sect, rather than in the council of God, and have spoken their own words rather than *His words*: we have consequently much zeal for proselytism: but a shameful neglect of moral duties, viz. those genuine, and generous morals, which evidence a true restoration of human nature; for mere imitations of morals by refinement of manners, and ceremonials of religion, are like artificial flowers, which may be beautiful in appearance, fine in colour and form, and resemble nature; but want the softness, the fragrance, and the very nature of flowers.

The doctrines of redemption as preached by the apostles, have been strangely neglected; or softened down by terms and phrases suitable to the taste of those who, like some, desired only to hear *smooth things*. And the doctrine of immediate

salvation, a restored nature, moral duties, obedience, and suffering with Christ unto death, have been, if at all, very feebly enforced. Can shepherds now in general say to their flocks, as Paul said to the Corinthians: "*Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God?*" Too many imitate the foolish man who built his house upon the sand; they zealously build without having dug for a solid foundation, and are in danger; others spend their time in laying a foundation in theory, but by neglecting to deny themselves, and to build on that foundation, the real practical part of religion, are become, as Peter expresses it, blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten (at least in practice) that they were purged from their old sins. "Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye *do* these things ye shall never fall." 2 Pet. i. 10.

When the gospel is preached in its simplicity and fulness, power attends the word of the Lord, it softens the hearts who receive it, as the rain and dew from heaven, waters and softens the earth: so human nature is restored, its fruits make a genuine appearance, pure morals, obedience, a patient continuance in well-doing, and suffering with Christ, like some of old, "who loved not their lives unto death," Rev. xii. 11. It is necessary, that the preaching of the gospel should impress men's minds with

sentiments agreeable to the precepts of religion ; and that it should evidently be the great object to which all things tend, that whosoever understands its principles, may be ready to shew that it tranquillizes human nature in particular, and extends its blessings to the whole state and order of the world.

Neglecting to inculcate the propriety of moral duties, and the still greater neglect of pointing out the restoration of our nature as the object of the gospel, has I fear deranged in the minds of many, the order and duty of morals and religion. The morals of unrenewed men are like the vine of Sodom, and the fields of Gomorrah ; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter ; and their pretensions to religion, ignorance or hypocrisy. *“ Unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth ; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee ?”* Psal. l. 16.

When religion gives laws to a new creation, old things being past away, and all things being become new ; it agrees then truly with the character of him from whom it comes, and describes ■ change of nature ■■ a work much more serious and important than a mere change of opinion ; for men may, on the strength of clearer evidence, and stronger argument, change their opinion ; but what ■■■■ can change his nature, and bring ■ clean thing out

of an unclean? Not one, Job xiv. 4. Those who received Christ at his first appearance in the flesh, *to them gave he power to become the sons of God, to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,*" John i. 12, 13. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth (saith James) that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures," James i. 18.

Physicians trace diseases from effects to causes, and on discovery apply remedies. Such conduct passes without censure, indeed it is very commendable. Will indulgence on the same generous ground be allowed, if honest enquiry be made concerning the diseased state of religion and morals? If pure morals be the best evidence of christianity, in what condition is religion in our day? We can never suppose that God, who is pleased with truth in the inward parts, and cannot be deceived with appearances, will accept at our hands a lifeless form of religion and morals. The cherubims of glory, which overshadowed the ark of the covenant and mercy-seat, were emblematic guardians of both tables of the law, for both were in the ark; and both have the same divine authority. The same lawgiver, who has said, "thou shalt love 'the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," &c. has also said, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "On these two commandments, (saith the Lord Jesus,) hang all the law and the prophets." In vain do we

profess love to God, if love to our neighbour is wanting ; or offer our sacrifice until reconciled to our brother. Although morals are grafted on the stock of christianity (at least by profession), they do not thrive ; but are drooping into lifeless forms of borrowed etiquette, instead of fruit to the glory of God, and love for his laws ; vice has become fashionable, native virtue smiled at ; and corruption has found its way into almost every path of life. Religion, the refuge of the pious and pensive mind, has not escaped : divisions, subdivisions, and names, and forms of endless variety, have disgraced it ; and avarice and contention have banished peace and love from their selfish circles. Judas betrayed Jesus into the hands of his enemies, for a trifling reward ; but many have betrayed the fair cause of true religion into the hands of its enemies, through pride of party and sordid gain. Would divisions be so numerous, if truth and love inhabited a pure humanity in professors ? 'Tis evident party walls are daubed with untempered mortar, and therefore a stormy wind shall rend them, Ezek. xiii. 15. The great end of our Lord's incarnation was to make known the true God, reconcile man to his law, and love, and duty, that peace and blessings might abound throughout the world, until the whole earth would be filled with his glory. Rising clouds, however, can never defeat the course of the sun, the Lord will arise, bruise the head of the serpent, restore pure morals, and the life of religion,

and destroy him who had the power of death, and give his people a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. How blessed and happy would it be to see professors of religion with the mind which was in Christ, that mild, humble, loving spirit which was in him, which spread itself like a morning sun on good men, full of light and life.

May his kingdom come, and its blessings abound, until all the families of the earth be blessed in him, and all nations call him blessed! And let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen. So prays yours in the Lord Jesus,

GEORGE M'CANN.

AN
E N Q U I R Y,
 &c.

CHAPTER I.

HUMANITY THE NATURE OF MAN.

“ How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
 How complicate, how wonderful is man !
 How passing wonder, He who made him such !
 Who centered in our make such strange extremes !
 How different nature’s marvellously mix’d,
 Connexion exquisite of distant worlds !
 Distinguished link in being’s endless chain !
 Midway from nothing to the Deity.”

YOUNG.

THE wisdom and power of God appear in the multitude of living creatures, which he hath formed, and continues in being, through the constant care of his indulgent providence : nor are the least of these creatures neglected or forgotten. Naturalists who investigate the works of God, inform us, that by specific marks, the genus and species of all creatures are carefully preserved, so that not

only the being, but the distinctive tribes of animals, are continued from generation to generation, which show forth visibly the infinitely diversified works of Almighty God. Not only hath he given being to an innumerable number of creatures, but also extends laws suited to the nature of every creature. "He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his mighty hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? In the heavens, on the earth, in the air, and in the sea,—the eyes of all things wait on God, and he giveth them their food in due season. He careth for bird and beast; a sparrow cannot fall without his knowledge; he clothes the lilies and grass of the fields; nor does the indulgent Creator refuse audience to the helpless brood of young ravens, nor despise their croakings when they cry unto him. If God, therefore, be merciful to all his creatures, the least of which have their being by his care, will man, whom he hath made Lord of this lower world, and placed him over the works of his hands, be forgotten of him? Certainly not. The Lord, speaking to his disciples, comforts them saying, "Be of good cheer, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

In treating of man's proper and specific nature, we shall find the best account of it in the Bible. The holy Scriptures afford, not only the best delineation of character, but they point out with the greatest accuracy the essential difference in the nature

of things. God's power is made known by his works; and his love and mercy, by the coming of the Lord Jesus, who comes to reveal the Father's name and to make known his glorious character;—to give the light of the glory of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. God looks down from the ineffable effulgence of the divine glory, through the various orders of creatures, from the first seraphim, down to the lowest animalcula, that life distinguishes from inanimated nature; and rules, governs, and blesses them, according to the nature of each; for all flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of birds, 1 Cor. xv. 39. Man was honoured with dominion over the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air. The human nature of man, the garment with which God clothed him, is man's proper nature, which dignifies and distinguishes him above all other earthly creatures: a nature suited to obedience, to reason, and to suffering, after the example of Christ. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.

The divine nature being the nature of the supreme God, believers are made partakers of a divine nature, by the great promises, 2 Pet. i. 5. Angels have a nature; but whether distinguished from each other, except by their orders, we are not informed, unless we gather something from the

word seraph, which signifies to burn, because they are as a flame of fire. This being the first order, and near the throne of God, may excel in strength perhaps the cherubim; and thrones may have a greater degree of glory, than the middle, or lower order. The first order being *Seraphims, Cherubims, and Thrones*; the second or middle order, *Dominations, Principalities, and Powers*; the inferior, *Virtues, Archangels, and Angels*. One of the mysteries in our holy religion is, that after the nature of man has been sanctified and brought into a state of true obedience, when we would suppose we should enjoy peace and rest, that on the contrary we are appointed unto death, not appointed to earthly honours and rewards; but, after the example of Christ, to suffer with him. This view of the pathway to heaven, surprised and alarmed even the disciples themselves; for when our Lord shewed Peter the approach of his own sufferings at Jerusalem, "Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, it shall not be so unto thee, Lord." The cross of Christ was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness; but the wisdom of God and the power of God to every one that believeth.

The degeneracy of man's nature has exposed him to the reproach of comparison with inferior creatures, nor is the comparison used sarcastically, but descriptively, according to the prophetic idiom. As David describes selfish invaders who were

enemies of Israel, calling them beasts, "Boars of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beasts of the field doth devour it," Psalm lxxx. 13. And the Lord speaking by Ezekiel saith, "O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts." This was a prophetic style, and taken up by John the Baptist, who called the covetous and wicked pharisees whom curiosity led to his baptism, a generation of vipers. And our Lord, in answer to the pharisees, calls the cunning Herod a *fox*, Luke xiii. 32.

And in another place the enemies of Christ are prophetically called bulls and lions, "Many bulls have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouth as a ravening and roaring lion," Psal. xxii. 12, 13. The Jewish watchmen are called dumb dogs, Isa. lvi. 10. And in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, when in the pride of his heart he ceased to act as a man, a beast's heart was given to him, he is not only compared to a beast, but made a beast; because he had dishonoured the nature of man, God in his justice gives him the place of a beast, and he was driven as a beast from among men, "*Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him,*" Dan. iv. 16. The apostle charges the Philippians to beware of dogs, to beware of the concision, who, from their disposition to bite and snarl, resembled dogs more than men. And our Lord warns his disciples against covetous and in-

human men, saying, "Cast not your pearls before swine, neither give that which is holy unto dogs."

Sin and folly has debased the human nature, not only to rank with dogs and swine, but has made man resemble the devil himself, and to do such vile and sinful things as beasts have never been guilty of.

Shall men who are made in the image of God, and capable of pure and rational happiness, recognize as their own, the sin of devils, and indulge their inferior appetites and passions, like perishing animals? God forbid. Sin is not naturally man's, it is only his as he wills and owns it; neither is it agreeable to the nature of man; but as poison to the body, so is sin to the soul—its disease, and will be its death, unless rescued by almighty power. "*Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*" Jer. viii. 22.

Man is a creature peculiarly distinguished by gifts and faculties above all other earthly creatures; it is true several others, in some faint lines, appear to resemble him. The lion may be said to resemble him in majesty; the elephant's memory and calculation, are shadows of his intelligence; the parrot mimics his speech; and various tribes of the monkey, in some degree approximate to his form; the dog shews the greatest sagacity, as it relates to scent and quickness of apprehension.

But the power to reason abstractedly, and deduce principle, is the distinguished province of man. The sympathetic sensibilities and powers of feeling, pervade all animated nature, for all express some degree of it. But its degree and quality must be known from the creatures themselves; for in such mixed modes, abstraction will not help our knowledge; we can only know of creatures, by those qualities of which their natures are expressive.

Reason is that noble faculty of the human mind which distinguishes man from beasts, but does not distinguish exactly the quality of the nature; for good men are not distinguished from bad by intelligence, but by the effects of the rational exercise of that intelligence, in conjunction with feelings of moral purity, as it regards their several duties, and connexion with the moral sympathies of man's nature; we must learn by his qualities, and only draw indications from those actions which we know and feel to be consequent with genuine human feeling, and always expressive of those qualities; for although nature is in itself simple, yet man having corrupted his way, by seeking out many inventions, he is not now pure and innocent as when created; sin and evil habits having defiled and corrupted his nature. Man, according to his human nature, is called good: Adam was so called in the garden; Job was called a perfect man; Stephen a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and Nathaniel an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, &c.

We distinguish man by the epithets of good and bad, honest or dishonest, wise or foolish, learned or unlearned, civilised or barbarous, human or inhuman. And all these are relative terms, and have derived their origin by comparing the several qualities with some standard of truth, real or imaginary. We should not neglect the criterions of truth, wherein are those maxims which time and experience have established, nor the law written on our hearts, which struggles through the corruptions of our nature, to set us right in matters of real interest.

It will be proper to observe, that there are two methods of humanizing, the one consisting in the bringing forth the shrouded qualities of our nature by civilization, such as an acquaintance with the arts and sciences, and the various advancements which society have made, in either a political or a moral point of view. The other consists in an evangelization of our nature, and is the work of God; it embraces all the moral qualities of the former, and exceeds it by communicating gifts and graces, whose influence gives peace and happiness here, and penetrates the boundaries of that eternal state, where humanity will be immortalized, and perfected in its union with its divine Author. The regenerating energy of divine grace produces a change on man, expressively called by the apostle, *a new creation*; for we are his workmanship, created again unto good works, which God hath ordain-

ed, that we should walk in them, Eph. ii. 10. To such a work, human science has been inadequate in every age: when darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. It is said as a ground of hope, "*The Lord will arise;*" without his hand no means will be adequate, the enmity of the heart has to be slain, this requires more than the student's skill; it requires the power of Him who can kill and make alive. Human learning has not been able to effect this mighty work, "*for when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save those that believe,*" 1 Cor. i. 21.

With respect to the influence of learning on the moral character, we may place knowledge between good and evil, as the astrologers of old placed the planet Mercury among the good and bad planets; for they supposed three bad and three good. Mercury being indifferent, they placed with the good, when he fell in conjunction with the good, but if he fell in conjunction with the bad, they then reckoned his influence evil.

Knowledge likewise is good, in conjunction with virtue and holiness, but has little power over the hearts of the wicked. From the wise adaptation of good laws, and the voice of public opinion, being on the side of justice and religion, bad men are restrained, and so far knowledge does good; but a marked difference still remains between nature changed, and nature only restrained.

Whatever has a tendency to civilize men, is so far good, for it does not oppose humanization, provided it be according to a sound mind, regulated by the will of God, for his will is our sanctification, and whatever tends to the happiness of man, glorifies God. These terms are convertible, and imply each other. When we can enjoy the happy sensations of a restored nature, sanctioned by the joys of reflection, and can add to these the hope of eternal life, following on to know the Lord, by imitating the example of him who hath called us to glory and virtue; we shall receive the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

If man be a creature possessing a rational nature, every kind of irrationality will be a corruption of that nature, and that man was created a rational being, we infer, from his having been created in the image of God; receiving laws both for his own, and the government of a multitude of creatures, consigned to his care: we cannot suppose the Creator would have committed the government of these to Adam, if he had been in any respect inadequate to the charge. Besides, as a reasoning creature, man was alone, none of the other species, being, in this respect, a companion for him, until God provided him with a reasonable companion, the image of himself. By the exercise of reason, we discover the dignity of man, and by the non-exercise of it, his weakness, and consequently his fall. The reasoning powers would, no doubt, have

been continually strengthened by their exercise, provided man had not sinned; but were quite unable to restore him to his former state of dignity and innocence again. The sins and stains of nature, errors and defects of judgment, with every perverseness of will, have to be purged by the atoning sacrifice: no less will remove them than the cleansing power of grace,—repentance unto life,—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Supposing reason to have influence on our proper nature, in all its passions and sensations, we expect to find the exercise of its government over them; for as soon as reason either ceases to exert this influence, or rules too rigorously, it becomes weak, loses its power over the passions, and the habits therefore become too strong; this is the consequence of reason ceasing to maintain its power of government over the passions and the will. For although the passions should be subject to the kingly government of reason, they are, notwithstanding, much inclined to rebellion; and reason is in as much danger as other kings, and, to preserve its dignity, should have recourse to the aid of the best laws and the best judges; taking also care that those laws be duly regarded, nor the judges allowed in the smallest point to set them aside. Under such a government, the passions, like good subjects, might live in great peace and true contentment, to the honour of both their king and his laws. Not only

so, but as well regulated states, by their good example, teach propriety of conduct to others; man, likewise, by his princely conduct over a little world of passions within himself, may teach the important lesson of self-government, and thereby be of great use in point of example to others; example being a much more powerful instructor than mere precept.

There are many figures illustrative of man's nature and duty, which he should study, understand, and improve for that purpose. Creative wisdom has provided these in great abundance; not only supplies for the wants of the many creatures which inhabit this globe, but besides forming a scene the most charming to the imaginative powers, discloses a large volume of hieroglyphic emblems, containing instructions for man, of peculiar use, and in great variety. Inexhaustible are the treasures both of nature and of grace; "Great are the works of the Lord;" as saith the Psalmist; "Sought out of all them who take pleasure therein." The culture of the earth is one of those figures, wherein man is taught from example, the propriety of useful exercise and manly labour. The men of Judah are called on by the prophet, to break up their fallow ground, and not sow among thorns, "*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, (saith Hosea); reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you,*" Hosea x. 12. It is no

less necessary that we cultivate our minds, than that we labour honestly in our fields. A considerable parallel of resemblance runs between land and the human mind, with respect to their improvement. If, in the natural world, industry is an object of praise, and idleness of blame; how much more in the mental! the labour of the first being only for a transient life, while the latter ensures the state of one never ending. The garden of the sluggard is a reproach to the owner; while the hand of the diligent maketh rich. A restored nature will bear comparison with a well cultivated garden. For as Adam was placed in the garden to dress it and keep it; likewise when our Eden is restored, we should be diligent in every good word and work. By these observations, however, I do not mean to attach any kind of meritorious reward to the observance of our duty: we are, at best, unprofitable servants, provided we had done all which was commanded us. Whereas we have sinned, and in all things come short of the glory of God. We are absolute debtors for every mercy, even the smallest of those many blessings which daily are bestowed upon us. Were we so vain as to think of offering a reward to Him whose already are all things, what could we offer but some insignificant part of his own? If we offer gold, we must get it among his earthly treasures; for we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out. And in the concerns of grace, "*Who hath first given*

him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?"

Rom. ix. 35. We can give nothing more for being born into a world of grace, than we can for being born into a world of nature; nor are we more the cause of the one than of the other. When we came into this world, others were inhabitants of it before us; when we came into a world of grace, (if indeed we be born again) we found others also in it before us; some for a longer, and others for a shorter time; and many since gone to a future state, to a world of spirits; and we are also moving forward on the constant wheels of time after them, and shall shortly see without a veil what great things the Lord hath provided for them that love him. But, lest we should neglect having on a wedding garment, we are expressly told, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: for the kingdom of heaven is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away; flesh and blood cannot inherit it, nor any thing that defileth. The kingdom of glory being an incorruptible kingdom, requires those who are to be its inhabitants to have an incorruptible nature; on this account it is said, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," 1 Cor. xv. 50. Nor are we to infer from this, that flesh and blood is sinful, but that the kingdom of glory is exalted above any enjoyment of which flesh and blood is capable. The garments of flesh are only for a time; these, if spotless, we may wear in a kingdom of grace here, but must lay them aside,

and put on a wedding garment, for the marriage feast in the kingdom of glory.

There is a difference between living in the flesh and living after the flesh ; for those who live after the flesh shall die—they pursue its sinful pleasures, and are dead to God while they so live ; they are sunk below the beasts, and glory in their shame ; can only be raised by regeneration, which is a renewal of our nature, by cleansing it from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and is therefore called a washing of regeneration. When our Lord speaks of this change to Nicodemus, he expresses it by a new birth : “ Marvel not that I say unto you, that ye must be born again.” The word *regenerate*, signifies being born again—such a renovating change of the same nature, as is equal to a new birth. Elihu, in reasoning with Job, appears to have had such a change in view, “ Deliver him from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s : he shall return to the days of his youth,” Job xxxiii. 24, 25. The word *sanctify* signifying to make holy, is taken in several senses by our translators ; it signifies, to free from the pollution, as justification does from the guilt of sin. Things dedicated to sacred uses, are called holy, as the Jews were called a holy people ; and their temple and the vessels of it were so called : such holiness, however, was only relative ; but real holiness signifies a cleansing from sin of every kind, inward and outward, in body, soul,

and spirit, that the holiness may be real; for it cannot be real sanctification, unless it produces real holiness, 1 Thess. v. 23. Justification is an act done at once, sanctification is a gradual work: by justification we are delivered from the wrath of God; sanctification conforms us to his image. "Sanctification is nothing less, (saith Archbishop Usher) than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt-offering to Christ." The church redeemed by the blood of Christ was to be sanctified by the washing of water, by the word—"that he might present it without *spot* or *wrinkle*, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Eph. v. 25—27.

There is a baptism of water, by which our sins and stains are washed away, and a baptism of fire in which the dross and tin of our natures are purged away. When the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit sits as a refining fire upon the sons of Levi, and purges them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Man stands accepted with God through the merciful redemption which is in Christ Jesus, being convinced of his sin and misery, and having lost all confidence in himself, flies to the refuge which God has set before him in the gospel, he receives the promise of eternal life by faith, resting on the Lord, for present, and everlasting salva-

tion. Thus having entered into his rest, he ceases from his own works. Heb. iv. 10.

The regeneration of our nature in the work of restoration, is no less than the creation of a clean heart, and the renewing of a right spirit within us; and, as it is called a cleansing or washing of our nature, may relate to the first baptism, and may be well enough expressed by the word *regeneration*. Only observe, by regeneration or baptism in this place, I mean directly a real cleansing from filthiness of flesh and spirit, and the answer of a good conscience towards God. But the higher change which passes on believers by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, which is the second baptism, not only cleanses, but changes our nature; not only washes away sin from our flesh, but purges away its dominion and influence from our spirits, fitting us thereby for an incorruptible kingdom, which flesh and blood cannot inherit. The necessity, therefore, of such a change, makes our cross-bearing, suffering with Christ, rising again, and reigning with him, figures of no mean complexion; seeing they are the direct way to glory. For, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

Regeneration prepares for living a holy life in human nature; sanctification, when complete in the full sense of it, is a preparation for glory, but while it advances through the subordinate stages of christian suffering and trial, it may associate with the work or act of regeneration, seeing it is

the same God of holiness which worketh all in all. 1 Cor. xii. 6. Regeneration prepares the human nature for obedient suffering unto death, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, typified by the sacrifices which were washed in the lavers which Solomon placed for the temple service. 2 Chron. iv. 6.; and which Paul explains, and enforces, as Christian duty; “*I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the tender mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service.*” Rom. xii. 1.

This sanctified devotion, and offering ourselves to God in obedience to his word and will, to suffer after the example of Christ, requires a nature, humane and holy, capable to suffer, and to suffer acceptably in the sight of God and man; for precious in his sight are his saints’ death. The sufferings of his saints, if called to suffer, (and believers are called to suffer, for they have it given to them to suffer for his name,) must be in the human nature; for in their divine nature they can obey, but cannot suffer, being raised above a suffering state. In the carnal state unregenerate men can suffer, but not with Christ; for the nature which suffers with Christ acceptably, must be holy.

Under the law there was a marked difference between the sin-offering and the atoning sacrifice; teaching us that no sufferings of sinful creatures can have any tendency to reconcile God to our sins, nor us to God while we love our sins; because the

sufferings of sinners are judgments in justice inflicted on them for the destruction of sin, therefore cannot excite commiseration. We must repent of our sins, forsake the practice of them, pour out the life beside the bottom of the altar, as was done with the blood of the sin-offering, and look to him who was sacrificed for us. The merciful High Priest of our profession, who knows our frame, sympathizes with our human infirmities, but not with our sinful inclinations. Our human nature is reconcilable to God, but sin and the Holy One are irreconcilable. Neither was the sin-offering placed on the altar: for the altar sanctifieth the gift. This forbids our offering sinful services to God, because sin cannot be sanctified, nor accepted of God; neither can God be reconciled to them, *Exod. xxix. 14.; Lev. iv. 11, 12, 21.; vi. 30.* The old man with his deeds must be put off; for without a sanctification of nature we cannot know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; nor be made conformable to his death, neither know the power of his resurrection. But admitting these distinctions, we come more readily to reconcile several passages of scripture with the analogy of faith, which otherwise to many have appeared difficult to understand. We may farther elucidate the subject, by considering the conduct of the two thieves who suffered with our Lord; one of them let us compare to the new man, or human nature; the other to the old man, or carnal nature. One is impenitent, the other penitent—one suffers

in hope, the other in fear, both guilty—one suffered in judgment being impenitent, the other obtained mercy : both desired ease from pain—this was reasonable in itself : but the impenitent wanted only immediate ease, and cared not for heaven in comparison ; the penitent, with believing resignation—the impenitent suffered murmuringly, like the carnal mind, wanting ease from pain for a little ; but the obedient, hoping to get rest for ever, petitions his Lord to remember him when he would ascend to his kingdom, showing no disposition to murmur, after he knows that his Lord was suffering with him. The compassionate Jesus was not with his fellow-sufferer as the chief butler was with Joseph ; he does not forget him, but graciously answers, saying, “ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,” Gen. xl. 23. Luke xxiii. 43.

If suffering believers would calmly reflect on these two thieves, and compare diligently the language and conduct of each, with the dispositions of renewed and unrenewed nature, viz. the new man who suffers with Christ by faith, and the murmurings of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God ; it would encourage them to suffer more patiently with Christ : seeing our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for the christian an eternal weight of glory. The christian suffers with Christ, in obedience to the same Father ; and their sufferings arise from the same kind of enemies ; they, moreover, suffer in

the same cause, and in the same nature; for He was made like unto his brethren, making them heirs with him of the same kingdom. They are supported by the same power, die in hopes of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has given in Christ Jesus before the world began. To those who die daily with Christ, the last day's death will have little terror. The death of the cross was *lingering*, painful, shameful, discouraging in appearance; but "*for their shame, they shall have double, and rejoice in their portion; everlasting joy shall be unto them.*" In proportion as we die with him, we shall also live; "For he hath torn," saith the prophet, "and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he shall raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," Hos. vi. 1, 2. The believer lives a life of faith on the Son of God—a divine life, not subject to death; "for he that liveth and believeth in Christ shall never die. *Believest thou this?*" John xi. 26. The Father and Son holds fellowship with the believer in his christian obedience and suffering, and revives the spirit of the contrite ones, by setting before them everlasting joy.

It may be thought mysterious, and some may enquire, how the Christian can be related to three natures, the carnal, the human, and the divine. He stands related to the divine nature by promise and by victory, 2 Pet. i. 4. The human is native; but the carnal is man's only by sinful choice, and his servitude of Sa-

tan, by which his sinful habits have become a second nature, properly called carnal : as the wisdom of the serpent is called earthly, sensual, and devilish. The cross-bearing Christian is only delivered from bondage in part—the old man is crucified, and deliverance obtained, as the new man suffers unto death, and is crucified with Christ. The human nature being offered upon the altar which sanctifieth the gift ; thus the living and dying obedience of the new man dissolves all kinds of relationship between the human and carnal natures ; “ *God breaks the yoke of his shoulder, and the staff of his burden, and the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.*” A separation is then made for ever—one reaches glory, like the penitent thief, the other is put off in judgment.

The Christian life is one of suffering, of hope, of fear, of glory, not of shame—“ *Dying, and behold we live.*” So then, as saith the apostle, death worketh in us, (who are suffering christians), but life in you, (who are growing christians) and not yet called to the dying part of the Christian work. Carefully taking this subject under these views, may throw some light on the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, in which have appeared some things hard to be understood ; namely, how an apostle should have such struggles with a carnal nature, and conflicts with Satan through its corrupt medium,—himself in bondage to this carnal nature, sold under sin, and, like a captive, in bondage

to death, and yet doing at the same time the will of God; serving the law with the inner man, and with the flesh the law of sin; and yet free from fault or crime—"It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Sin he acknowledged to be as an inmate or lodger, whose company he did not desire, but earnestly wished deliverance from it, being often so distressed with it, that he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He neither, however, charges himself with the guilt, love, or practice of sin; nor speaks of danger; but rejoices that with his mind he served the law of God, although with his flesh, the law of sin. Suffering from sin is not charged to us as sin: the Christian suffers most from sin, when he most entirely resists it. Paul's suffering from sin is no proof of his sinning; for there is a specific difference between following the flesh and the flesh cleaving to us. "Consider him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." It is merciful in God to proportion our unavoidable sufferings, to the measured period of our short and uncertain time: because faith, reason, patience, and the other christian graces, and moral virtues, require time for planting, for their growth, and regular advancement to maturity. For all the works of God which are to us obvious, rise from almost imperceptible beginnings, increasing and advancing

in perfection, until they extend beyond our reason; but doubtless advance in eternity, and rise to higher perfection for ever. The evil and misery which man hath introduced by his sin, will be removed, when man hath learned truly what an evil thing, and bitter it is to depart from God, and submit also to have sin destroyed, in his appointed way; namely, the destruction of sin by the creation of a new nature, which implies the putting off the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, Eph. iv. 22. If the heart be deceitful and desperately wicked, a new heart will be indispensibly necessary. It will be no less necessary that Christ be formed in the heart the hope of glory, than it was for his incarnation, to constitute the joy of the world, for such he was to all those who expected his coming as the promised Messiah, the Desire of all Nations. How dark and disconsolate must the world have been, if the long-expected Messiah had not blest it with his presence! No less wretched must that heart be, where Christ has never yet been formed the hope of glory. The serpent's head was to be bruised by the seed of the woman: in this character Christ appeared, in spotless humanity, to suffer as well as obey, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in order to bring into the world an everlasting righteousness; to conquer Satan, not only as the god of an unregenerate world, but also destroy his empire, which, alas! has been too long in the heart of the children of

disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. The heart is the regal seat of Christ, which Satan had usurped, but which the Lord regains, and where he will reign until he hath put all things under his feet. By taking away sin, the sting of death is removed ; therefore to die is gain ; nothing more intervenes between the believer and glory, but the vale of flesh, which, in obedience, he gives up for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The human nature is exchanged for divine, a nature which cannot sin ; for he that is born of God cannot sin, because his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God, John iii. 9. There appears no way of victory, but as we die unto sin, that is, suffer patiently the death of human nature, because this dissolves the connexion between the new and carnal nature, “ for he that is dead is free from sin ; that being dead wherein we were held ; that we should serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” Rom. vii. 6. For as the apostle reasons, if the law which could only condemn and kill, was glorious ; how shall not the Spirit, (the giver of pardon and of life,) be rather glorious ? Under the law the sacrifices were holy : under the gospel, worshippers are to approach God “ *with true hearts, in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water,* Heb. x. 22. Christ commands us, saying, “ be ye always ready.” We should, therefore, guard our sacrifice from every

spot or stain of sin, as Abraham, who would not let the birds light on the sacrifice which he was about to offer to God, Gen. xv. 11. When our bodies are offered a living sacrifice, having suffered unto the death, and being raised and immortalized, sin, death, and hell are completely conquered, and that for ever. "Blessed are they who have their part in the first resurrection, for over them the second death shall have no power."

Lest theory should prove too slender a guide in the great concern of our soul's salvation; let us set before us the example of Christ, who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Christ being a perfect pattern of every excellence, is given to us for imitation; in whose example we see perfect obedience to the law, a willingness to fulfil all righteousness, supreme love for God, his heavenly Father, and a delight at all times to do his will; the most affectionate love for men in general, and for his disciples the most indulgent regard, with a constant zeal for the worship and glory of God. The religion of the carnal Jews had become merely an outward observance, while their hearts went out after their covetousness. Meanwhile Jesus shews in his own example the majesty of the law, and the heavenly beauties of the gospel; he unites the purest morals with the sublime truths of heaven, and teaches religion founded and finished in love. Moses made the cherubims which overshadowed the mercy-seat,

both of beaten gold; and our Lord makes love, the cherub of religion and morals,—the spring of duty to both tables of the law, and joins them in the most happy bond of union. Love unites by a true relation, faith and works; nature and grace; earth and heaven. It is this spirit that extends the gospel in the freest mercy, and yet establishes the law in the greatest purity, and, by establishing salvation by grace, lays the surest foundation for all kinds of good works. He renews our nature, restores order, and blessings; destroys nothing but the works of the devil, thereby establishing his kingdom in truth and righteousness, for ever and for ever.

CHAPTER II.

RECONCILIATION AND FREE-WILL.

THAT man is restored to a free-will agency, appears by the abounding of grace, and the duties consequently enjoined. Salvation is by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; by whom the object of faith (not the exercise of it) is made to believers *wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. The command to repent, and believe the gospel, becomes a privilege from which nothing excludes but unbelief, and only faith receives. Man's freedom, therefore, by grace, is implied, through the redemption which is in Christ, and every mouth stopped from boasting, for all have sinned; from complaining, for grace hath abounded through the Lord Jesus Christ, "*The healer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in.*" Isa. lviii. 12.

The word *atonement* signifies agreement, union, or reconciliation, and seems in our language, to be compounded of *at* and *one*, as it were making *at one*. The reconciliation of man to God through

the Lord Jesus Christ, is the great work of redeeming love. The love of God, and his willingness to be reconciled to man, appears in the gift of his Son. It was sin only which caused a disunion between God the Creator, and his happy creature man. This same evil continues the only hindrance to a reconciliation; for it is evident that God was not dissatisfied with human nature in a state of purity, from the free, loving converse which God held with Adam in the garden, before he sinned, and the audible voice from heaven, which testified of Christ, when clothed in human nature, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." Indeed, the consistency and propriety of human nature being an object of divine love, is one of those great truths established by the incarnation of Christ.

Some truths of primary importance, and essentially necessary for man to know, believe, and practise, in order to his present and everlasting happiness, and such as could not have been demonstrated so fully in any other way, has been demonstrated and confirmed by the coming of Christ; proofs are multiplied by his death, and resurrection from the dead by the power of God, giving thereby the highest authority of divine sanction to all those truths which he taught in his blessed life, putting beyond doubt his many miracles; his resurrection, ascension, intercession, and the sending the Holy Ghost, which confirm all

prophecies and miracles which went before, omitting no evidence which was necessary to satisfy any reasonable mind.

Among those precious truths which have been brought to light by the gospel, are, *First*, The evil nature of sin, the origin of which, is the disobedience of free intelligent agents, by their abusing mercies and privileges, with the tendency of their sin in its nature, to ruin the peace of society. *Second*, The holiness of the law, and the wise adaptation of its precepts to guard our happiness. *Third*, The gospel teaches, that man is fallen, and that as a sinful creature he is obnoxious to the justice of God. *Fourth*, The immortality of the soul, and the way of recovery from sin by the atonement of Christ. And, *fifth*, The great mercy of God through Jesus Christ, the medium of his love. These truths, have been taught darkly, by types, shadows, typical persons and typical things, by prophecies, and miracles, "*but now the true light shineth,*" by the example of Christ and the sufferings of the Son of God, who now once in the end of the world, hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: "*And unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*" Heb. ix. 28. How gross must the darkness of sin be, when it is so difficult to be pierced even by the very beams of the Sun of Righteousness! The Spirit uses the ministry of law and gospel, for convincing man of

his state, and the necessity of restoration. Man can never recover himself; it is by grace only he can be saved: nor will he seek salvation by grace, unless he sees the malignity of his sin; nor can he bear to see it, without some hope of remedy. This cannot be from himself; it must be of God, and emanate from his essential goodness and mercy; hence, the necessity of the blessed and glorious gospel, so wisely suited to the present state of the world. The depravity of man induces him to hate God, and shun him as an enemy; so that unless God can reveal himself through some medium of mercy, which will inspire the sinner with hope, without awakening too much his fears, he is likely to perish through despair. And if he is not inspired with a sufficient sense of his sin and danger, he is likely to perish through presumption. Now nothing can more impress the mind of man, with a just sense of the greatness and goodness of God, than the whole gospel economy,—its promises inspire hope, its sacrifices, threats, and judgments, inspire awe: both reveal God. Behold Deity taking all the forms of mercy, to raise and cherish in man the hopes of eternal life! Yet clothing himself in awful majesty, and issuing his fiery law in thunder, to inspire man with becoming awe, that he might be humbled, and learn to look through the medium of mercy—the Lord Jesus Christ, for acceptance, and everlasting life!

Sin is that delusive meteor which benighted man

loves, and the accursed thing which a holy God hates. God is a pure and good being, unchangeable in his nature. In order to a reciprocation of love between God and man, sin must be purged away ; and the change has to be effected in man, and in him as a rational creature, by persuasion, not by forcing his will. Both Christ and his apostles use the language of persuasion, "Come unto me, and learn of me," is the merciful language of invitation. And Paul says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. v. 20. The law is magnified and made honourable, both by the sufferings and obedience of Christ, and are pleadable by him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. We may see the evil of sin in the sufferings of Christ, by his awful judgments on the impenitent, and by the misery which it has brought on all mankind, sin, therefore, being enmity itself, which must be slain, for it can never be reconciled to the purity of God or his law, nor the proper nature of man, consequently in the reconciliation of man to God, the destruction of sin is implied ; for, by the coming of Christ the purity of the law was revealed to man ; and by the law, sin in the evil of its nature, that man might be satisfied with its destruction, and also by our sins being laid on Christ the mercy of God was made known, and the way of salvation by faith in Christ ; and the nature

of salvation, viz. the destruction of sin and the rescue of humanity from the power of the enemy. Moreover, the way to glory, by taking up our cross and following Christ, in faith, and obedience, unto death; "In hopes of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, has promised in Christ Jesus before the world began." Tit. i. 2.

The subject of reconciliation to God through the atonement of Christ as a sacrifice, has been disputed under many forms, and viewed in different lights. But here I would glance at it chiefly as it respects the propriety of each and every man, believing the good news of the gospel. For if Christ be a sacrifice of infinite value, his obedience will be equal to the demands of the law; and if he has magnified the law and made it honourable, mercy will be infinite, and the promise "unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 22. "For the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him," Rom. x. 12. But some who admit the divinity of Christ, and the efficacy of his atonement, yet demur on the evidence of intention; for they say, the efficacy of the blood of Christ was equal to the redemption of the whole universe, provided God was pleased so to apply it.

Provided we admit the divinity of Christ, we cannot deny the infinity of his sacrifice; and if infinite, it will be equal to the law, and pleadable

for every purpose of mercy ; but, to suppose God who gave his Son freely up to the death for us all, would have any reserve in the offers of mercy, is contrary to reason, the attributes of God, and the language of his sacred volume, which contain his revealed will, and which doubtless accords exactly with his secret intention ; for “ he is not a man that he should lie ; nor the son of man that he should repent,” Numb. xxiii. 19.

The great Jehovah declares, saying, “ As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that the wicked turn from his way and live,” Ezek. xxxiii. 11.—“ *God is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,*” 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Every where in Scripture blame is attached to sin, and blame of no small degree ; every thinking man is conscious, that when he has done wrong, he could and should have avoided the wrong, and should have done the good which he finds he has omitted.

Now if sin be evil, and the perpetrators be to blame, where shall we place the blame ? If God has made man capable of knowing and doing his will, most assuredly his disobedience is punishable ; the unprofitable servant is charged with wickedness and sloth, not for destroying what was bestowed, but for not improving it. Either God has withheld grace and mercy from those who indulge in sin, and are likely to perish, or they have abused

mercies bestowed on them; if we admit the latter, man who sins and perishes, bears the blame for ever, and God is true, and every man (who would charge his sin on the decree or will of God) a liar. If we suppose some for whom Christ has not died, salvation being by grace, and grace coming through the death of Christ, those not represented, or in other words, passed by, perish fatally, without hope of remedy. It can in no respect be proper in us to call any thing wrong that the Lord will do; for the Judge of the whole earth will do right. Nor should we believe it possible for God to do any thing contrary to his attributes, his word, and repeated declarations. But should we for reasoning's sake suppose God to withhold grace and means of salvation from man, whatever otherwise might be said, we could not blame man for doing the evil which he had no power to avoid, nor for omitting the good which he had no strength to perform;—I do not say strength of his own, separate from grace, for that no man can have.

We find in the Scriptures, that what the law commands, the gospel promises, and faith realizes. When God commands all men every where to repent, then answers the gospel, saying, “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” And John saw in heaven, of all nations, and tongues, and languages, rejoicing before God. Rev. v. 9. vii. 9. xiv. 6. But to this may be replied, that those to whom it is

given will believe, and no other. It is said that those who believe not shall be damned ; which implies a refusal of the offered mercy, and proves disobedience to the command. Here their ruin is not because grace is not offered, but because it is not received. If those to whom the gospel is offered, would believe the love of God, and that he sent his Son to bless men, by turning away every one of them from their iniquities, God would realize the blessings of the gospel to them. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, when they refused the salvation of God, saying, “ How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings ; but ye would not !

In the present enquiry, on the subject of the atonement, we find that the scriptures warrant every son and daughter of Adam, viz. all and each of the human race to believe on the Son of God to everlasting life ? For we read, that “ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life ;” and of God being in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses, John iii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 19. The atonement appears to every thinking Christian mind, both from Scripture and reason, a gracious design, full of wisdom, mercy, and love. It reveals the character of God, throws heavenly light on the dark shadow of the law, by uniting two natures in one person, revealing God and the

holiness of the law, with the conformity of obedience which its precepts require, while the character and duties of man are delineated in the example of Jesus, which he has given as the rule of obedience to all his true and faithful followers.

The obedience of Christ is completely satisfactory, being a full conformity to every demand of the law : its penalties endured by his sufferings, and its precepts by the obedience of his holy life. The Lord Jesus has appeared as our advocate, pleading our cause before God, and revealing him to us ; he is therefore the great reconciling Mediator, between God and man, seated on the mercy-seat between the cherubims, where God communes with his people ; shewing God to be just, and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.

Christians can now rejoice through the establishment of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are under the dispensation of laws divine, fixed, and eternal ; mercy sanctioned by justice, and that justice honoured by mercy ; they have a merciful High Priest of their profession—one Lord, one faith—one baptism—one altar—and an holy sacrifice ; with the promise of divine aid, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto his people, giving them the knowledge of the Scripture, and helping our infirmities in prayer, interceding for the believer according to the will of God. Admitting, therefore, the perfect reconciliation of God to the in-

terest of man, (may we say all and every one?) the apostle says, "the free gift is unto all and upon all those who believe, for there is no difference," Rom. iii. 2. And John says, "this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ; and love one another, as he gave us commandment," John iii. 23. Reason may be satisfied from the attributes of deity, and faith from the testimony of his word, and even his oath, that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: but would rather the wicked would return from his wicked way and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. It will be, I hope, unnecessary to mention the absurdity of supposing that God, who is holiness itself, could by any means be reconciled to our sins; these must be destroyed; "Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings (saith the Lord) from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 16, 17, 18.

Our union with God implies the destruction of our sins; not by covering them, but by washing them away, and by the creation of a new heart and right spirit within us. Sin is enmity, and must be destroyed, as no engagement can be kept with it; hence the necessity for the restora-

tion of a human nature, which will be capable of reasoning and of obligation, such a nature as may be drawn by cords of love, and the bands of a man, all of which, in its ransomed state, it will be capable of, or laws would be made in vain. Adam being made in the image of God, possessed intelligence, will, and power; that these were enslaved by sin and lost or obscured by the fall, is evident; the very loss, however, proves these blessings once to have been in possession. These being lost by the sin of Adam, which was the violation of the law of liberty and love in which Adam was created, and not the effect of a decree, as the *Supra Lapsarians* think; who believe that God decreed that Adam should necessarily fall.*

Our Lord commissions his apostles to preach the gospel every where, Mark xv. 15. If the gospel therefore may be preached so generally, it will certainly become the duty of every one to believe; and if every accountable creature may believe on Scripture authority, we may reasonably conclude that God extends his grace and mercy to all, through the infinite atonement of Christ Jesus, our Lord. For if Christ be a sacrifice of infinite value, his obedience will be equal to the demands of the law; the law therefore being magnified by him and made honourable, mercy will be as infinite as the law, which David describes as being exceeding broad.

* Buck's Dictionary, word *Supra-Lapsarian*.

The gospel of God's grace speaks out in a language of love, full, and free, and wide, as the universe, having the sanction of the honourable law to which it is commensurate: this, being the gospel privilege and truth of God, lays a solid foundation of hope to every returning sinner, "The Lord Jesus being able to save to the uttermost, every one that cometh unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25; the promise being unto all, and upon all them who believe, for there is no difference; seeing that the same Lord over all, is rich in mercy to all who call upon him, Rom. iii. 22. and x. 12. None of those who believe in the divinity of Christ, should have remaining doubts with regard to his intention of dying for all mankind, nor of the efficacy of the atoning blood, nor yet demur on the evidence of its efficacy to all mankind. When we speak of the intention of God to save all, or only a part, we come to the stress of the question, viz. What we may justly suppose the gracious intention of God to have been? For those who set aside the moral agency of man, conclude, that whatever God intended should be, will most certainly come to pass, (overlooking in this critical link of the chain of purposes, the probationary state of man) God having declared the end from the beginning, and the things which are not yet done from ancient time, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. On this and some

other Scriptures they build up opinions of fatal necessarianism ; as if man was not restored to moral agency, nor to be treated as a rational creature, capable of choosing or refusing by the gracious privileges of a new covenant ; for this is the question, whether or not every man may be saved by the grace which is in Christ ; I say by grace, for it would be trifling to talk of men being saved in any other way, who are already dead in trespasses and sins. But when I say salvation, I mean, in the first instance, from sin,—its guilt, by the atoning blood of Christ, and, secondly, from its pollutions by virtue of the fountain opened in the house of David, for washing away of sin and uncleanness, redeeming both flesh and spirit from the corruption of sin, and by this means effecting the regeneration of a sanctified humanity,—or in other words, giving us hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and bodies washed as with pure water.

No rational christians can believe that God is or can be the author of sin ; but some of those who, in their contracted notions of reasoning, take away the freedom of the will, and make man only a necessary being, hold opinions, the consequences of which are no less than a supposition that God is the author of sin ; for if we admit sin to be the breach of a good law, committed by a free intelligent accountable creature, and if man be such a being, and conscious of his own acts, and sensible of both duty and obligation ; his sins may be charged to his ac-

count. But those who deny the free exercise of these capacities to man ; and only shelter under a sovereign agency, those sinful acts performed by men, go as far as mistaken notions can go, in supposing that God is the author of sin. Provided we are right in calling the violation of the law, which causeth the disorders of the world, by the term *sin* ; we must charge the evil agency to man, unless we come under the curse of those who put evil for good, and good for evil, thereby blotting out the distinctions between good and evil, leaving no fit idea for the term sin. I do not, however, suppose, that all who hold the errors of men's systematic notions, see the consequences of their mistakes ; yet their sin is not hereby taken away ; it is only less aggravated. But to return, if God at first made man in his own image, and again restores him in Christ, to what he lost in Adam, will he not be treated as a rational creature, after he is restored, as Adam was before he sinned in the garden?

The merciful Redeemer may therefore enquire of the Gentile church now, as he once did of the Jewish, "what could have been done for my vineyard, which has not been done for it?" Could God have done more for man's salvation, than has been done, and is continually doing? Men are both by law and gospel, treated as men of reason, judgment, and understanding ; they are dealt with in kindness, drawn with cords of love, and the bands of a man. Such acts of kindness, and reasonable argu-

ments, are the conquering weapons which a merciful God uses to gain a willing people. Invitation and persuasion are moral motives and means adapted to the powers of a rational mind, and are much more suitable than methods of compulsion. God initiates us, as it were, into the mystery of religion, by shewing us his designs, and the means he has chosen to accomplish them, viz. by grace and love, by reason, and argument; for by these the Lord pleads with men. Hence saith Jesus, "*the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you,*" John xv. 15. Indeed the Scriptures seem to me, as one continued proof of man's accountability, and of God's kind and merciful dealings with him, according to his responsibility: for the promises, threatnings, precepts, examples, invitations, and warnings, are all addressed to them as men of reason and judgment, all of which confirm the important truth.

The extension of mercy to all the sons of Adam by the atonement, accords with the voice both of Scripture and reason. By this view it appears, that the law is magnified, God glorified, and the sinner humbled; every mouth is stopped from boasting, for all have sinned; from complaining, for eternal life is offered to all; and where sin hath abounded much, grace did much more abound. The difficulty which has appeared to some, however, on this subject is this, viz. How any disappointment can fol-

low, as a consequence of God's most perfect wisdom? For if, say the objectors, God intended to save all men through the sacrifice of Christ, either all men will be saved, or the purposed salvation will be frustrated; but say they, we have no solid ground to believe that all men will be saved, neither can God in the end proposed, be defeated; they therefore deny the premises, and conclude, that God never did intend to save all men.

To suppose an intention absolute, implies compulsion, which would be contrary to the nature of the happiness which God has provided for his willing people. But a design to save men graciously, consistent with the accountable state in which man is placed, is a very different mode of procedure; for compulsion would destroy in man the principle of agency, while the other preserves it.

God cherishes the budings of thought, and watches over the opening powers of the minds of men; the Father of mercies adapts his teachings to the growing powers of the mind, as gardeners watch and water their most delicate flower beds; or as a loving father watches the dawning reason of his infant child. We have no right, however, either to question the gardener's strength, or the father's parts, from their necessity of using such gentle methods; as their skill and love are called into exercise, rather than their strength. For was the salvation of man to be effected only by power, with the same ease as God made the world, could he call man into life. But

to bring forward his own blessed image in the perfect freedom of reason and holiness, requires not only time, but also the love, patience, power, and wisdom of God.

If God, therefore, by very tender mercy, and long-suffering, goodness, and patience, watches over men for their good; having given his Son to die in their stead, and is willing with him to freely give us all things; we cannot conclude from any of these, that God has not intended to save mankind. Moreover, if God has nourished and brought up children, which have rebelled against him, and if to these rebellious children, he holds out his hands all the day long, declaring his willingness to save them; yet while they continue obstinate, and will not submit themselves, but resist the Holy Ghost, and trample on the blood of the everlasting covenant, and refuse to return, until they have sinned the sin unto death: What shall we conclude? Shall we say that God did not intend to save them, after so many proofs of his love: Or shall we say of these impenitent sinners, that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord? "They would none of my counsels, (saith the Lord) they despised all my reproof; I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded: I will also laugh at their calamity, (saith the Lord,) I will mock when your fear cometh," Prov. i. 24, 25. Therefore we conclude, that

the glory of man's salvation is the Lord's, and the blame of man's destruction is his own.

The work of salvation, contemplated apart from the responsible situation in which man is placed, represents the Creator as the sole agent, by which that great event was brought about; and so in point of fact he was; yet not exclusive but inclusive of man's moral agency; for although a most material difference is made in the scheme of salvation, by the place wherein we suppose God has put man, viz. whether as a moral or a necessary agent; it makes no difference in the absoluteness of the divine will or government; for God has no less glory by man's being made a moral agent; nor will the will of man interfere with regard to the freedom of the absolute will of God: neither will the divine will coerce, or unduly bear upon the will of man. But it is not only in the contemplation of God's goodness, as it appeared to the angels, and to Adam before he sinned; but in this amazing connection of love with human nature in man's salvation, that we perceive his unspeakable mercy, on our behalf, reaching to the very depths of misery into which our sins had plunged us, and mingling the counsel of divine love, with flesh and blood, in the very depth of its complicated miseries.

How cold and uncomfortable are the notions of many persons concerning religion! They desire salvation from hell, but are not careful to have a

salvation from sin; not thinking that salvation from sin can only secure a salvation from its miseries, which form hell. Such persons wish heaven hereafter; yet desire not the purity of religion, or the spiritual worship of God here. They content themselves with reading the history of Christ; but shew no desire to bear his cross, or know the fellowship of his sufferings.

They seem content with professing a religion which they know not the blessings of. The Holy Scriptures, which were to the Jews lively oracles even under the dark shadow of the law, are now clothed with dust on the shelves of some professing christians, or if brought down sometimes, soon become fatiguing intelligence. Will it be so, when God shall make all things *new*? when worldly amusements will for ever pass away; and the night which is far spent, gives place to the day which is at hand? As these things concern us, my dear reader, “*Let us therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer; blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord cometh, shall find so doing.*”

We are therefore brought to choose one of two opinions; either to believe that God has withheld mercy in the gift of Christ to the world, and that consequently, Christ did not die for those who perish;—or otherwise, to believe that man is restored by the grace of God, to the privilege of choosing everlasting life, or of refusing the purchased salvation offered by a merciful God. With those

who say our salvation is altogether of grace, I frankly consent,—by grace first, and last, and once for all. We cannot of ourselves think one good thought; all our sufficiency is of God. Neither can any come to Christ, except drawn by the Father: Not unto us, but unto God be the glory. But when we come to attach blame, to whom does it belong? “*This is the condemnation, (saith the Son of God,) that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil,*” John. iii. 19. “I would have gathered you,” saith the Lord to Jerusalem, “and ye would not.” And again he saith, “*Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life,*” Matt. xxiii. 37. John v. 40.

Salvation not only implies a deliverance from all the miseries to which our sins have exposed us, with the nature and consequences of them, but a realization of all the contrary blessings which the gospel promises; sin is enmity, and has in its nature a deceivableness, which is opposed to all good: this appears from the opposite nature of their characters. God is light, sin is darkness; God is love, sin is enmity; God is life, sin is death; God is good, sin is evil. If it is reflected on calmly, that nothing can effectually oppose evil and conquer it, but a contrary nature of superior power, it may discover to us the necessity of a new heart, and right spirit being created in us. For light only can conquer darkness, love enmity, &c. Nor is

even our regenerated nature sufficient to withstand the evil of sin, unless kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. *For consider him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself; lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.* But being supported by the power of God, and being faithful unto the death, the believing soul will be more than conqueror, through him that hath loved us. The love and mighty power of a risen Saviour, will enable the triumphant believer to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

From the result of my enquiries on this subject, I do not find that man had power over sin in himself, by any degrees of mercy manifested, before he receives it by grace in his regeneration; but as faith comes by hearing, so far as he has gracious privileges and opportunities, he is in duty bound, with all the powers he has, (for so far he is an accountable creature) to submit himself to God's method of saving sinners, through the blood sprinkling of Jesus: for otherwise he may, by rebellious unbelief, forfeit his own salvation: "for he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16.

But when God, by his grace, restores men, it then becomes their duty and privilege, by grace through faith, both to believe and obey the revealed will of God. For the merciful Lawgiver never gathers where he has not strawed; nor calls us to the ex-

ercise of any duty, without the gift of power being implied in the command; for although the law and gospel are distinct, they have nevertheless such unity of design, that whatever the law commands, the gospel promises, and faith both believes and receives; and what the gospel promises the law commands. When all men, therefore, are commanded by the law to repent, and believe the gospel, the grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient for the great purpose; for God sends not any a warfare at their own charges. Even threatenings and judgments are issued with conditions of mercy and pardon; "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon him," Isa. lv. 7.

Actions morally good or evil, must be those of a person capable of distinguishing, choosing, and acting for himself; viz. in other words, an intelligent, free agent; because properly speaking, no act can be ascribed to that which is not endowed with these capacities. For if it acts, it acts under a necessity incumbent on it by something else, and is, therefore, in reality, only an instrument in the hand of that which imposes the necessity; and cannot properly be said to act. The act must be the act of the agent, not of the instrument. David is charged with the murder of Uriah by the prophet. "*Thou hast slain Uriah the Hittite, with the sword of the children of Ammon,*" 2 Sam. xii. 9.

Objections have been made to the freedom of the will, on the supposition of God's foreknowledge taking away all contingency, and consequently freedom of will. It is true we cannot otherwise think of God's foreknowledge than perfect wisdom free from any possibility of error; judging and ordering all things according to their proper nature; not calling contingent things necessary, nor necessary things contingent. It will be evident, that those things which are contingent, and proceed from a free-will principle of acting, are allowed to be such by God's consent; for there is no reason to confine the omniscience of God in bounds more narrow than his omnipotence; which all men acknowledge to be able to do whatsoever does not imply a contradiction. We may say, therefore, that the foreknowledge of contingent effects, which proceed from a free-will principle of acting, either implies a contradiction, or it does not. If it does imply a contradiction, then such effects are not the objects of God's omniscience, nor determined by it. But if it does not imply a contradiction, then we may actually confess, that divine prescience, and man's free-will, are not inconsistent; but that both of them may fully stand with each other. Therefore no sound or convincing argument can be drawn from God's foreknowledge.

The bare certainty of divine foreknowledge can never be proved to destroy man's freedom, or make any alteration in the nature of his actions, and con-

sequently is altogether besides the question concerning liberty. All that the greatest opposers of liberty have ever urged or can urge, amounts only to this: that foreknowledge implies certainty, and certainty implies necessity. But it is denied by those who write on the side of liberty, that certainty implies necessity; or that foreknowledge implies any other certainty than such as would be equally in things, although there was no foreknowledge.

The certainty of prescience does not cause the certainty of things; but is itself founded on the reality of their existence. Whatever now *is*, it is certain that it *is*, and it was yesterday and from eternity, as certainly true that the thing would be to-day, as it is now certain that it is; and thus certainty of event is equally the same, whether it be supposed that the thing could be foreknown or not. For whatever at any time is, it was certainly true from eternity, as to the event that they would be: and this certain truth of every future event, would not have been the less, though there had been no such thing as foreknowledge; mere prescience, therefore, has no influence upon any thing, nor contributes in the least to make it necessary.

We may illustrate this in some manner, by the comparison of our own knowledge, we know certainly, that some things *are*; and when we know that they are, they cannot but *be*; yet it is evident our knowledge does not cause them so to be,

but sees them to be, because they are. Foreknowledge in God is the very same as knowledge; all things are to him **as** if they were really present, to all the purposes of knowledge and power; he knows what shall be, with the same ease that he knows what *is*; as knowledge, therefore, has no influence on things that are, so neither has foreknowledge on that which shall be. The manner how God can foresee future things, without a chain of necessary causes, is impossible for us to explain distinctly, although we may conceive some sort of general notion of it. For as a man has no influence over the actions of another person, yet can often perceive beforehand, what that other will do; and a man still more experienced, will with greater probability, foresee what another, whose dispositions he is more perfectly acquainted with, will do under certain circumstances. And an angel who excels in heavenly wisdom, may have a still greater prospect into men's future actions.

The manner how God can foresee future things without a chain of necessary causes, is impossible for us to explain, though some sort of general notion may be conceived of it.

We may therefore apprehend, that God who created all things, and sees all things, may have the most perfect knowledge of all future events, without influencing men's wills to evil by his power. The mere foreknowledge of any action that would upon all other accounts be free, cannot alter or di-

minish that freedom ; it being evident that foreknowledge adds no other certainty to any thing than what would equally be in things, though there was no foreknowledge. And as foreknowledge implies no other certainty than such as would be without foreknowledge, neither does the necessity of events imply necessity ; for let a fatalist suppose (what he does not grant) that there is in man a power of beginning motion, that is, of acting freely ; and let him suppose further, if he please, that those actions could not possibly be foreknown ; will there not, notwithstanding this supposing, be in the nature of things the same certainty of event in every one of the actions, as if conceived fatal and necessary ?

For instance, suppose the man by an internal principal of motion, and an absolute freedom of will, without any external cause or impulse, does some particular action to-day, and suppose it was not possible that this action could have been foreseen yesterday ; was there not nevertheless, the same certainty of event, as if it had been foreseen ? viz. would it not, notwithstanding the supposed freedom, have been as certain a truth yesterday, and from eternity, that this action was an event to be performed to-day, (though supposed never so impossible to have been foreknown) as it is now a certain and infallible truth that it is performed ? Mere certainty of event does not therefore in any measure imply *necessity*,

and consequently foreknowledge, however difficult to be explained as to the manner of it, yet, since it implies no other certainty, but only that certainty of event which the thing would equally have, without being foreknown, it is evident that it also implies no necessity.”—*Clarke on the Attributes*, p. 107.

Much has been said both on the side of necessity and of free-will. “No one, (says the necessarian) denies that every act of volition, is an act of choice. No one maintains that a choice of preference, has not predisposing causes; or that the feebler motive overcomes the stronger.” Hence it must happen, that circumstances uncontrollable by a given agent, have indirectly controlled his spontaneous actions.

For as Hobbes writes: “Those actions which a man does on deliberation, are said to be voluntary, and done by choice and election. In all deliberations, or ultimate successions of contrary appetites, the last is what we call will. All other appetites, to do or quit, which come upon a man during his deliberations, are called intentions and intimations, but not wills. Of a voluntary agent, it is all one to say he is free, and to say he hath not made an end of deliberating. Now as nothing taketh beginning from itself, but from the action of some other agent without itself, the cause of a man’s *will* is not the will itself, but something else not in his own disposal. So that whereas of voluntary actions,

the will is the necessary cause, and whereas the will is also caused by other things, whereof it disposeth not, it follows that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and are therefore necessitated."

It must be acknowledged that the necessarian displays considerable ingenuity, by granting a supposed liberty, and at the same time, from the greatest apparent freedom, reducing the advocates for moral agency to the necessity of a single alternative.

But notwithstanding this ingenuity, the necessarian loses his point again: when it is maintained that the necessity of choice, so far from being an opposing argument, that it proves both the greatest security of liberty, and the best exercise of reason; his liberty of choosing right, shews him free, with the best of moral motives to persuade his choice; "*choose life that ye may live.*" For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, James i. 13.

CHAPTER III.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

Yes, 'tis Divinity's implanted fire,
 Which bids the soul to glorious heights aspire ;
 Enlarge her wishes, and extend her sight
 Beyond this little life's contracted round,
 And wing the eagle flight
 To grandeur, fame, and bliss without ■ bound.
 Ambition's ardent hopes, and golden dreams,
 Her towering madness, and her wild extremes,
 Unfold this truth to Reason's eye,
 That " Man was made for Immortality."

VARIOUS have been the opinions entertained concerning the substance of the soul. The Epicureans conceived it to be ■ subtle air composed of atoms, and called it *efflorescartia materia*, and some more refined called it *flos flama*. Lucretia resembles it to *flos baechar* and *spiritus emgenti suavis*. The Cartisians make thinking the essence of the

soul. Some have been of opinion that man is endowed with three kinds of soul, viz. the rational, which is purely spiritual, and infused by the immediate inspiration of God ;—the irrational or sensitive, which, being common to men and brutes, is supposed to be formed of the elements ;—and lastly, the vegetable soul, or principle of growth and nutrition ; as the first is of understanding, and the second of animal life.

The rational soul is simple, uncompounded, and immaterial, not composed of matter and form ; for matter can never think or move of itself as the soul does. In the fourth volume of the *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, the reader will find a very valuable paper by Dr Ferrier, in which he shews that every part of the brain has been injured, without affecting the thought. A discovery tending to overthrow the theory of the materialists, who think that the principle of perception is not a substance distinct from the body, but the result of corporeal organization.

The immortality of the soul may be argued from its vast capacities, boundless desires, great improvements, discontent with the present state, and desire of some kind of religion. It is also argued from the consent of all nations ; the consciousness men have of sinning, the alarms of conscience, and the Providence of God.

But admitting the truth of revelation, life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. Our

Lord not only taught the immortality of the soul, but exemplified its verity in his ascent to heaven, before the sight of five hundred witnesses. It has appeared to me so closely connected with the being of a God, that the full belief of the one lays the foundation of the other. For God being love itself, and completely independent, could have no end in view by creating such creatures as men are, unless to impart to them of his own felicity in order to make them happy ; and as we perceive that a few transient years in a world of change, pain, and uncertainty, cannot be designed as the full portion of a rational creature bestowed by his benevolent Creator ; therefore a place of rest and happiness remains after this life, to equal the highest hopes of those who shall be found worthy to enter in through the gates into the city. The most happy way whereby we can come to the knowledge of God is, by a contemplation of our own souls, which were made in the image of God.

We cannot think but according to our own intellectual capacities, or form any other idea of Him than what the impressions of our own souls will permit us. If the reasonable soul be not of an immaterial nature, it must be body, and so made up as all bodies are ; and if the soul be nothing but mere body, it will be divisible, *ad infinitum*, as all bodies are. But although the real soul is expansive, and can extend thought to many objects, yet it is not divided, but continues a simple essence, and

not divisible like matter. The Peripatetic philosophers were of opinion, that our senses never deceived us, whether they were *sani* or *lasi*, sound or diseased, or whatever proportion or distance the object bears to it; for if we closely examine this position, we shall find that nothing of judgment belongs to sense, as it consists only of perception; neither can it make just observations of those things which are without; and, therefore, when the eye finds the sun's orbit represented within itself, of no greater size than a foot diameter, it is not mistaken, for this is the appearance which it makes to the eye, and the same to one person as well as another.

The senses, in all things of this nature, do but declare the appearance made on the perceptive faculty, which are always such as they seem to be, whether there be any such parallelism, signaculum, in the objects, as bears a true analogy with the object or not, they are never deceived in the execution of their function. Error is neither sense or fancy, it being only chargeable to those faculties where reason is concerned.

Though reason inculcate this notion ten thousand times over, that the sun is larger than the earth, yet the eye will not be taught so to see it any larger than it appeared before it received instruction from science.

There is a more noble power in the soul than that by which it accommodates itself to the body,

and according to the measure and proportion thereof, converseth with external matter; and this is the reason why we are so apt to be mistaken in sensible objects, because our souls, taking in the knowledge of external thereby, and unmindful of the proportion that is between the body and them, passing by its native notions, classes their corporeal impressions with external objects, and judgeth of the one by the other. But when our souls act in their own proper strength, disengaging themselves from all inferior intanglements, they then find confidence to give the preference to things pure, rational, and eternal, looking with comparative indifference on perishable things. The soul's noble power of abstracting itself from inferior pursuits, and dwelling in futurity, may be considered as proof, at least of its immateriality.

Some materialists suppose, from the powers of the soul decaying with the body, that they are therefore only finer parts of matter, which are organized with the body, as flowers with their stems. It is true, the powers of the soul do appear to us to weaken and decay; but let us think on the medium of our perception. There is a close union between the soul and body: when the body is much decayed, the soul has not the same advantage of expressing its powers by the actions of the body. But it does not follow as a clear proof from this, that the soul's powers are decayed in themselves, although evidently less active to our view, through

the weakness of the body. The soul's powers are not weakened by sleep, yet they appear less active. Observe, also, when we part with friends, how a few miles or leagues distance makes a great difference in the powers of communication. Moreover, very frequently experience teaches the sage, the folly of those pursuits which engage the younger. As the difference between the pursuits of the mind, resemble the distance between bodies, and shows a propriety in silence; yet we are not authorised to interpret this silence into a want of powers, but rather into a want of an occasion to use them to purpose.

Joseph thought his aged father had mistaken when he laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, and his left on the head of Manasseh. "And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father replied, and said, *I know it, my son,*" Gen. xlviii. 10. The body and the senses being the soul's medium of visible communication; when they are broken down by death, the medium of communication, at least of a visible or earthly kind, is thereby removed, but the powers of the soul may be no less strong in themselves. Instance the strength of a soul, which we may observe to animate the body to great activity, yea, with agility to carry and run with a body when in healthful life and undecayed, which it will require severals to carry when that soul has fled.

Indeed the great strength of a spirit, and its vast powers, we can but imperfectly know in this shadowy state of things, or the great advancements the lapse of a few years (if time could be measured in a future state) will add to them in a state of perfect blessedness. John fell at the feet of an angel to worship him. No doubt, supposing him to be no less than his glorified Lord, until the angel said unto him, "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. The soul's powers whereby we judge and discern things, is so far from being body that it must retreat and withdraw itself from all bodily operations, when it would discern and meditate on the naked truth abstractedly. For should our souls always mould their judgments according to those impressions which seem to be formed thereof in the body, they would be liable to class up many errors and delusions instead of truth. For should the judgments of our understanding wholly depend upon the light of our eyes, we would thus conclude that our mere accesses, and recesses from any visible object have such a magical power as to change the magnitude of visible, and to transform them into all those varieties of figures and fashions, and to attribute all that variety, which we find in our corporeal perceptions.

"The soul (says Plato) is various, and pointed ac-

cidentally in these motions wherein it extends and spreads itself as it were upon the body, and so according to the nature and measure thereof perceives its impressions; yet it is indivisible, returning into itself again."

When the soul goes out in search of truth 'itself; it will not then listen to those several clamours and votes of the rude senses, which always speaks with divided tongues: but it consults some clearer oracle within itself: for should a man connect bodily appetites with his speculations, it would entangle his mind with so many contradictions, that it would be impossible to attain to any true knowledge of things.

There is such a faculty within the soul as collects and unites all the perceptions of our several senses, and is able to compare them together; something in which they all meet as in a centre. Therefore that in which all these several sensations meet as so many lines drawn from several points in the circumference, and which comprehends them all, must be one; for should that be various, and consist of several parts, which thus receives all these various impressions, then must the sentence and judgment passed upon themselves be various also. Aristotle in his *De anima* saith, that "That must be one that judgeth things to be diverse, and must be capable to judge likewise, seeing that all of which it judges, appear before it at once."

Besides, we could not conceive how such an immense variety of impressions could be made upon any piece of matter, which would obliterate and deface one another.

That knowledge which the soul retains in itself of things past, and in some sort previous to things to come, whereby many become sagacious in foreseeing events, that they know how to deliberate and dispose of present affairs, so as to be ready furnished, and prepared for such emergencies as they see in a train and series of causes, and those sometimes work but contingently. How could Epicures himself, in his cool moments, be so unreasonable as to persuade himself, that any shuffling, and cutting of atoms whatever could produce such a divine piece of workmanship as the soul is? What piece of matter could ever thus bind up together (by rational inference) past, present, and future time? And this is done by the soul of man, which, (while it doth it, seems to imitate, as far as its own finite nature will permit,) strives after an imitation of God's eternity, proving thereby the soul's descent to be from Him in whose image it was at first formed. For by thus grasping and gathering together a long series of duration into itself, it shews thereby a desire, and makes an effort to deliver itself from the rigid laws of a confined existence, and to purchase to itself the freedom of a true eternity. Thus by its chronicle and successive operations, it unravels and unfolds

the contexture of its own indefinite intellectual powers by degrees ; so that by its provisional powers of memory, it recollects, and winds them all up into itself again. And though it seems to be continually sliding from itself in those vicissitudes and changes which it runs through in the constant variety of its reflexes and emanations, yet is it always running back to its first original, by a swift remembrance of all those motions, and multiplicity of operations, which have begot in it the first sense of this constant motion ; as if we should see a sun-beam perpetually flowing forth from the bright body of the sun ; and yet ever returning back to it again. It never loseth any part of its being, because it never forgets what itself was ; and though it may number out a vast length of its durations, yet it never comes nearer to its old age, but retains a lively sense of youth and infancy, which it can at pleasure lay hold of, and bring along with it.

But if our souls were nothing else but a complex of fluid atoms, how should we be continually roving and sliding from ourselves, and soon forget what we once were ? The new matter that would come in to fill that vacuity which the old had made by its departure, would never know what the old were, nor what that should be that would succeed. That new pilgrim and stranger-like soul would always be ignorant of what the other before it knew, and we would be wholly some other being than we were before. Such a jewel as the soul, is

too precious to be found in a dunghill. Mere matter could never thus stretch forth its feeble force, and expand itself over all its former pre-existences; we may as well suppose this dull and heavy earth we tread upon, to know how long it hath to dwell in this part of the universe where now it rests, and to tell the variety of creatures which have in all past ages sprung from it, with an account of the events which have happened upon it.

The *elicit* motions of the soul, as the moralists call them, which, though they may end in those they call implicit acts, yet their first emanations are from nothing else but the soul itself. For the purpose of elucidation, we shall take notice of two sorts of actions, which are obvious to the experience of every one who is at the pains to observe himself. The first are those actions which rise up in us without any animadversion: the other are those which are consequent to it.

When we analyze the whole organized system of the human body, proceeding from the spirits to the blood, and from that to the heart, viewing throughout, the mechanical contrivance of veins and arteries, we know not, after all our search, whether there be any *perpetuum mobile* in our own bodies, or whether all the motions thereof be by the redundancy of external motion without us, nor how to find the first mover in nature; and even if we could find out that, yet we know there is a necessary deternation which sits in all the wheels of mere

corporeal motion ; neither can they exercise any such noble freedom as we find in the wills of men, which are as large and unbounded in all their elections, as Reason's capacious powers can represent existence itself to be.

The immateriality of the soul may be considered from the mathematical notions of which it is capable of expatiating on, and containing within itself ; which, as they are in themselves indivisible, and so of such a perfect nature as cannot be received nor immersed into matter ; so they argue that that subject in which they are seated, to be of a true, spiritual, and immaterial nature ; such as a pure point, *linea*, latitude abstracted from all profundity—the perfection of figures—equality—proportion—symmetry, and asymmetry of magnitudes—the rise and propagation of dimensions—infinite divisibility, &c. which every ingenious mathematician cannot but acknowledge to be the true characters of some immaterial being, seeing they were never buried in matter, nor extracted out of it ; and yet these are transcendently more certain and infallible principles of demonstration than any sensible thing can be. There is no geometrician but will acknowledge *angular sections*, or the cutting of an arch into any number of parts required, to be exact without any diminution of the whole ; but yet no mechanical art can so perform either, but that the place of section will detract something from the whole. If any one should endeavour to double a

cube, as the oracle once commanded the Athenians, requiring them to double the dimensions of Apollo's altar by any mechanical method they pleased, he would find it as impossible as they did, and be as much laughed at for his pains as the Athenian mechanics were.

If, therefore, no matter be capable of any geometrical effluxions, and the apodictical precepts of geometry be altogether inimitable in the purest matter that fancy can imagine; we must then depend upon something more than matter, which hath that power and certainty within itself which it gives to those infallible demonstrations.

St Austin was of opinion, that the immortality of the soul could be proved from the notion of quantity of which it is capable; for this knowledge it could not possibly have from experience, ■ no matter is equal in quantity to the soul's conceptions of space; and therefore, as he thought, must be immediately impressed or engraven upon an immaterial soul. For although we could suppose our senses to have taught us, as our first teachers, the alphabet of this knowledge; yet nothing else but a true mental essence could be capable of it, and so much improve it, as to abstract it from body, and strip it naked of any sensible garment, and then only when it performed this, embrace it for its own, and commence a true and perfect understanding, and as we hold it impossible to shrink up any material quality which shall be liable to

spread itself perpetually, commensurate to the matter it is, into a mathematical point: so it is much more impossible to extend and stretch forth, any immaterial and embodied quality or notion, according to the dimensions of matter, and yet to preserve the integrity of its own nature. Besides, in these geometrical speculations, we find that our souls will not consult with our bodies, or ask any leave of our fancies, how or how far they shall distribute their own notions, by a continued progress of invention; but, spending upon their own stock, are most free and liberal, and make fancy only to serve their purpose, in pointing out not what matter will afford a copy of, but what they themselves will dictate to it; and if that should be too busy, silence and controul it by their own imperial laws.

They so little care for matter in this kind of work, that they banish it as far as may be, from them, or else chastise and tame the unruly and refractory nature of it, that it should yield itself pliable to their sovereign commands.

Those embodied bodies, (for so this present argument will allow me to call them,) which our senses converse with, are perpetually getting together, and contending irresistibly each for its own room and space to be in, and will not admit of any other into it, preserving their own interests; but when they are once in their embodied natures entered into the mind, they can easily penetrate one another. The soul can easily pile the vastest num-

ber up together in her own imagination, and by her own force sustain them all, and make them all couch together in the same space. She can easily put all these five regular bodies together into her own imagination, and inscribe them one in another, and thus entering into the very heart and centre of them, disown all their properties and several respects one to another, and thus easily find herself freed from all material or corporeal confinement.

Shewing that all that which we call body, rather issued forth, or was spake into existence by some mind, than that it should exalt itself into the nature of a mental being; and as the Platonists and Pythagorians have long since well observed, that the body should rather be included in the idea of soul, than the soul to be confined in the idea of body.

The soul's degrees of knowledge are, *first*, a naked perception of sensible impressions; the *second* degree, ■ miscellaneous kind of knowledge, arising from ■ colation of its sensations with its own dark ideas; *third* degree, discourses and reasons, which the Platonists describe mathematical knowledge, because it spins out its own by a constant series of deductions, knitting up consequences one upon another by demonstrations, and is by a progressive kind of knowledge, which he calls a fourth; which we shall now make use of, for a further proof of the immortality of the soul, which we may call a naked intuition of eternal truth, which is al-

ways the same; which never rises nor sets, but always stands still in its verticle, and fills the whole horizon of the soul with a mild and gentle light. There are such calm and serene ideas of truth, that shine only in *pacate* souls, and cannot be discerned by any troubled fancy, that necessarily prove some stable permanent essence in the soul, which ariseth only from some immoveable and unchangeable cause, which is always the same. These operations of the mind are not merely energies, but the true badges of an eternal nature, and speak (as saith Plato) in man's soul. Such are the antitypical ideas of *justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity, and omnipotence*; with every moral, physical, or metaphysical notion, which are either the first principles of science, or the *ultimatum* and final perfection of it.

These we always find to be the same, and know that no exorcisms of material changes, have any power over them. Though we ourselves are but of yesterday, and mutable every moment, yet these are eternal, and depend not upon any mundane vicissitudes; neither could we ever gather them from our observations of any material thing where they were never sown. If we reflect upon our own souls, how manifestly do the species of reason, freedom, perception, and the like, offer themselves to us, whereby we may know a thousand times more distinctly, what our souls are, than what our bodies are? For the former we know by a familiar

converse with ourselves, and a distinct sense of their operations; whereas all our knowledge of the body is little better than historical, which we gather up by scraps from more doubtful and uncertain experiments which we make of them; but the notions which we have of a *mind*, viz. something within us, that thinks, apprehends, reasons, and discourses, are so clear and distinct from all those notions which we can entertain of a body, that we can easily conceive that if all the *body-being* in the world were destroyed, yet even then we might subsist as well as we do at present. For whenever we take notice of those immediate motions of our own minds, whereby they make themselves known to us, we find no such thing in them as extension or divisibility, which are contained in every corporeal essence; and having no such thing discovered to us from our nearest familiarity with our own souls, we could never so easily know our relation to our bodies, were we not reminded by those extrinsical impressions that their turbulent motions make upon them.

Plotinus says, That the discursive power or science of the soul is blameless, but yet is corrected by the mind, as restoring that which is indivisible, and dividing simple being as if it was compounded. As fancy corrects sense for discerning with passion and material mixture, from which that purifies its object; opinion corrects fancy, because it apprehends things by forms, which itself has got-

ten above; and science corrects opinion, because it knows without discerning of causes; and the mind or intuitive faculty corrects the scientific, because by a progressive kind of analysis, it divides the intelligible object, where itself knows and sees things together in their undivided essence: therefore this only is immoveable, and science or scientific reason is inferior to it in the knowledge of our being.

Dr Samuel Clarke thinks there is great reason even from nature itself to believe the soul to be immortal. "A tradition, (saith he) so ancient and so universal, as cannot be conceived to owe its origin either to chance or to vain imagination, or to any other cause than to the Author of nature himself. And the most learned and thinking part of mankind, at all times, and in all countries where the study of philosophy has been in any measure cultivated, have almost generally agreed, that it is capable of a just proof, from the abstract consideration of the nature and operations of the soul itself. That none of the known qualities of matter can in any possible variation, division, or composition, produce sense, and thought and reason. It is highly unreasonable and absurd, to suppose the soul made up of innumerable consciences, as matter, which is necessarily made up of innumerable parts; and on the contrary, that it is highly reasonable to believe, that the seat of thought is a simple substance, such as cannot be divided or crumbled into pieces,

as all matter is manifestly subject to be; consequently the soul will not be liable to be dissolved at the dissolution of the body, and therefore it will naturally be immortal.”—“ I cannot imagine, (saith Cyrus, in that speech which Xenophon relates he made to his children a little before his death,) that the soul while it is in this mortal body lives; and that when it is separated from it, that it should then die. I cannot persuade myself, that the soul, by being separated from this body, which is devoid of sense, should thereupon become itself likewise devoid of sense. On the contrary, it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the mind is separated from the body, it should then become most of all sensible and intelligent. But further, when we take into consideration all the high and noble faculties, capacities, and improvements of the soul; the argument becomes much stronger.”—“ I am persuaded, (saith Cicero,) when I consider with what swiftness of thought the soul is endued, with what a wonderful memory of things past, and forecast of things to come; how many arts, how many sciences, how many wonderful inventions it has found out; that that nature which is possessor of such faculties, cannot be mortal.” Again, he observes in his *Tusc. Quist.*, “ The memory, (saith he) which the soul has of things that have been, and its foresight of things that will be, and its large comprehension of things that are present, are plainly divine powers; nor can the wit of man ever in-

vent any way, by which these faculties could possibly come to be in men, but by immediate communication from God.

“ Though we see not, (saith he) the soul of man, as neither indeed are we able to see God, yet as from the works of God we are certain of his being ; so from the faculties of the soul, its memory, its invention, its swiftness of thought, its noble exercise of all virtues, we cannot but be convinced of its divine original and nature.” And speaking of the strength and beauty of that argument deduced from the wonderful faculties and capacities of the soul, concludes it to be of an immaterial and immortal nature : “ *Though all the vulgar and little philosophers in the world,*” saith he, “ *(for so I cannot but call all such as differ from Plato and Socrates, and those superior geniuses,) should put their heads together, they will not only never while they live, be able to explain any thing so neatly and elegantly ; but even this argument itself, they will never have understanding enough fully to perceive and comprehend, how neat, and beautiful, and strong it is.*”

The chief prejudice against the soul's immortality which has been objected by the ancient epicurean philosophers, and modern atheists, is this : That they cannot apprehend how the soul can have any sense of perception without the body, wherein evidently are all the organs of sense.

But neither are they equal to explain how the

soul *in* the body (that is according to their opinion, the body itself,) is capable of sense or perception, by means of the organs of sense. And the argument, that the soul can have no perception when all the ways of perception that we have at present ideas of, are removed; is exactly the same argument, and no other, than what a man born blind would make use of with the very same force, to prove, that none of us can possibly have in our present bodies, any perception of light or colours.

The reasonableness of the soul's immortality, afforded great pleasure and satisfaction to the wisest men in the heathen world, and was a great support under calamities and sufferings, especially those who suffered in the cause of virtue and truth. It afforded great pleasure from the bare contemplation of the thing itself. "*Nobody,*" saith Cicero, "*shall ever drive me from the hope of immortality; and if this my opinion concerning the immortality of the soul, should at last prove an error; yet it is a very delightful error, and I will never suffer myself to be undeceived in so pleasing an opinion, as long as I live.*"

These contemplations had such an effect upon Socrates, that when he was tried for his life, he neither desired an advocate to plead his cause, nor any supplication to his judges for mercy; and on the very last day of his life, made many excellent discourses upon the subject; and a few days before, when he had an opportunity afforded him to have

escaped out of prison, he would not lay hold of it. For thus he believed and taught, that when the souls of men depart out of their bodies, they go two different ways; the virtuous to a place of happiness, the wicked and the sensual to misery.

The belief of a future state was a great encouragement to the practice of moral virtue, by subjecting the moral appetites and passions to the reason of the mind. "We ought to spare no pains," saith Plato, "to obtain the habit of virtue and wisdom in this life; for the prize is noble, and the hope is very great." But we have not yet mentioned the greatest and chiefest rewards which are proposed to virtue; for what can be truly great, in so small a proportion of time? The whole age of the longest liver in this our present world, being inconsiderable and nothing in comparison of eternity.

Another argument arises from the consciousness which all men have of their own actions, and the inward judgment which conscience passes upon their own minds; "For they," as Paul says, "although not having the law (of Revelation) are a law unto themselves, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing, or else excusing one another." "There is no man," says Dr Clarke, "who at any time does good, and brave, and generous actions, but the reason of his own mind applauds him for so doing; and no man at any time does things base, vile, and dishonourable, but at

the same time condemns himself for what he does. The one is animated with joyful hope, which accompanies virtue, while torment and fear are the punishment of the vicious. And hence, it is not probable that God should have so framed and constituted the mind of man, as necessarily to have passed upon itself ■ judgment which shall be verified, and stand perpetually and unavoidably convicted by a sentence which shall never be confirmed.

Man is evidently in his nature, an accountable creature, and capable of being judged: an argument may be from thence drawn, in proof of a future state. Man having within himself a free principle of determining his own actions upon moral motives, and has a rule given him to act by, which is right reason; cannot but be accountable for all his actions, how far they may have been agreeable or disagreeable to that rule. Every man, because of the natural liberty of his will, can and ought to govern all his actions by some certain rule, and be able to give a reason for every thing he does. Every moral action he performs, being free and without any compulsion or natural necessity, proceeds from some good motive or some evil one,—is either conformable to right reason, or contrary to it,—is worthy either of praise or blame, and capable either of excuse or aggravation. Consequently it is highly reasonable to be supposed, that since there is a superior being from whom we received all our fa-

culties and powers ; and since in the right use or abuse of those faculties in governing them by the rule of right reason, or in the neglecting that rule, consists all the moral difference of our actions ; there will at some time or other be an examination or inquiry made into the secret motives and circumstances of our several actions, how agreeable or otherwise they have been to the rule that was given us, and a just judgment passed upon them.

The wisest of the ancient heathens believed and taught, that the actions of every particular person should all be shortly tried and examined after death, and have accordingly a just and impartial sentence passed upon him. *“ From this judgment (saith Plato,) let no man hope to be able to escape : for though you could descend into the depth of the earth, or fly on high to the extremities of the heavens ; yet should you never escape the just judgment of the gods, either before or after death.”* If *“ I ascend up into heaven,”* saith David, *“ thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there ; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me,”* Ps. cxxxix. 8, 9, 10.

That there is a future state after death, we have the most satisfying reasons to believe ; for if we suppose the events of this life to have no reference to another, the whole state of man becomes not only inexplicable, but contradictory and inconsistent

The powers of the inferior animals are perfectly suited to their station. They know nothing higher than their present condition; their appetites are satisfied from earth, they fulfil their destiny and pass away.

Are we to believe that man alone comes forth to act a part which carries no meaning, and has in view no adequate end? The capacities with which man is endowed, extend far beyond this present sphere; every scientific pursuit opens with new beauty to his powers, and shortly soar into futurity; shall man be stopt in his very entrance to these sciences and pursuits of happiness for which his mind is capable, and which the shortness of time and other reasons have forbidden the attainment in this present state?

He squanders his activity on pursuits which he discovers to be in vain; he languishes for knowledge which is placed beyond his reach, and thirsts after a happiness which in this short life he can never enjoy. He sees and laments the disasters of his state, and without immortality there is nothing to remedy them. Can we believe that God who is perfect in all his works and ways, would leave this noblest piece of his work on earth imperfect? Did he call into existence this magnificent universe, adorn it with so much beauty and splendour, and surround it with those glorious luminaries which we behold in the heavens, only that some generations of mortal men might arise, to look on

the miseries of man, and the wonders of the heavens alternately, and then disappear to be no more for ever?

How inconsistent the commencement of his hopes, and the vast preparations of his powers and faculties, with such a despicable end! How contradictory in short, were every thing which concerns the state of man, with the wisdom, goodness, and perfection of God.—*He that heareth my word, (saith Jesus) and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, John v. 24. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, Rom. viii. 11. “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, 1 Thess. iv. 14. “Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him, 1 Thess. v. 10.*

But although the New Testament sufficiently proves the doctrine, yet some have doubted whether there be any where in the Old Testament, any reference to a future state, as it is supposed that the Mosaic covenant contained no promises relating directly to it. Good men were animated by the hopes of futurity, from the days of righteous Abel. The covenant with Abraham

was an everlasting covenant, and contained promises of heavenly felicity, which the Mosaic covenant could not disannul, Gal. iii. 17.

Out of this covenant also, our Lord convinces the Sadducees of a future state; for they receiving only the five books of Moses, did not think that they spoke any thing of a resurrection. But our Lord reasons from these words, where God says, “*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,*” which our Lord explains by saying, “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” Luke xx. 38.

We may notice a marked difference between the Jewish state, and the gospel dispensation; the Jewish state was a theocracy, having the immediate presence of God; and by the many gifts of law, covenants, and promises, it was designed that of them should also come the Messiah; they were to be witnesses and messengers of the covenant of God’s grace to all lands; for Christ was promised to be “a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.” His kingdom was to be over all, a powerful kingdom; the righteous were to flourish in his day, and peaceful blessings to continue, while the sun and moon would endure. He was pointed out under many emblems, as the seed of the woman, alluding to his human nature, and its ascendancy and conquest over the power of evil, by bruising the serpent’s head; all things were to be restored, and death swallowed up in victory;

universal empire was to be his dominion, and all families of the earth were to be blessed in him; consequently he became the desire of all nations; and the blessed dispensation of his grace is emphatically called the "*latter day's glory*," that eventful period in which we now live. Preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight in the desert an highway for God, occupied the faith, love, zeal, and time of the Old Testament saints; for his sake they were killed all the day long, they were counted as sheep for the slaughter.

"Through faith, (saith the apostle,) they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens," Heb. xi. 33, 34.

They expected the Messiah to come to them, and restore all things; for according to the Scriptures, he was first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory; the vail of the temple had to be rent before the way to the holy of holies was made manifest. This veil of the temple was a type which signified his body which was to be rent, that we might have access to the mercy-seat of God, and to the holy of holies in the heavens. A present blessedness strengthens our belief of a future; the kingdom of grace being first established on earth, helps us to believe in a kingdom of glory, "eternal in the heavens."

CHAPTER IV.

MORAL DUTIES AND CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

Moral virtue is the foundation and the sum, the essence and the life of all true religion : for the security whereof, all positive institutions was principally designed ; for the restoration whereof, all revealed religion was ultimately intended ; and inconsistent wherewith, or in opposition to which, all doctrines whatsoever, supported by what pretence of reason or authority soever, are as certainly and necessarily false as God is true. *Dr S. Clarke's Evidences.*

THERE is a consistency between christianity and genuine morality, our happiness and God's glory, which give the lie to all other systems ; and stamp it with a divinity of origin invulnerable to the encroachments of scepticism, and the innovations of erring and sophistocated reasoning. It is the echo of nature, and harmonizes with nature's laws ; it bears the impress of the attributes of the God of nature ; and its bearings, adaptations, and effects

upon human character, sufficiently warrant our adoption of its truth. Mark! How nature recoils upon herself, and how her laws and religion shudder at the blood-stained tenets of the false prophet of the Turks! How she shrinks from the sight of ravaged countries, the orphan's tears, and the widow's unutterable woe! Or leaving the sanguinary field, and tracing him to his retirement, the scenes of lewdness, the gratification of passion, and the unnatural practice of adultery, and the establishment of arbitrary dominion. Mark! I say, how human nature recoils. Look reader, into your own heart, ask if Mahommet has an advocate there? Ask if the proper organization of society is not calculated by such monopolies to be unhinged, your own individual peace to be invaded, and your Creator robbed of his glory? Has christianity no superior incitements? does the author of our faith hold out no better example? Instead of waving the blood-stained banner, like Mahomet, and sacrificing to his almighty power, the enemies of him, for whose glory he came amongst us; we find him healing them, comforting them, and instructing them. In his private hours we find him interceding for them, and even in death asking his Father to forgive his very murderers, on the ground, that they were ignorant of what they did. Reader, look once more into yourself; the soul approving sensation awakened by the contemplation of such a God-like example, may determine your

choice, convince your judgment of the rationality and divinity of a system uniting natural religion, and that which involves itself, and fix your faith upon him, who is the great author of it, upon whom our hopes of immortal felicity can only be consistently founded. Natural and revealed religion are two faithful witnesses in the cause of divine truth; and those who are enemies to one, are not true friends to the other; the first, by arguments undeniable, prove to us the being and power of God, speaking of his providence and wisdom in the mild accents of universal nature, and in the majesty of his mighty works: proving the invisible "being and glory of God, from the things which are made," Rom. i. 20. While the second makes known his divine nature, laws, love and mercy. While the testimonies of both agree, in declaring the power, goodness, and wisdom of God, the first speaks more of temporal, the other of spiritual things. One like the doubting disciple, hopes and fears, yet almost believes a future state; while the other brings future things to light, and proves life and immortality, by the gospel.

This brings facts from the present world, that from the future, both appeal; this to a law written on our hearts, and that to one revealed from heaven; this of earthly, that of heavenly things; and once more like John's two witnesses, they live or die together.

The being of God is proved from nature, and

admitted by the Bible ; which is a proof of the genuineness of the Scriptures, that they attempt not to prove the being of a God ; for his visible works do it sufficiently, but proceed on the demonstration of the truth, admitting it as already proved. The purer beams of intellectual light, proceed from revelation ; and to human nature belong the virtuous sympathies, the tender feelings, and sublime sensations, which in their union endear society, and form those tender ties which link the rising circles together, and thereby raising its aspiring ranks to the summit of usefulness and honour.

It is not intended that pure intellect alone should complete our felicity ; nor does pure sensation, separate from reflection, constitute our happiness ; sensation and reflection reciprocated, are more likely to form it, at least they make a more likely substitute for the purpose.

In the bright example of the Redeemer shines the character of perfection . both nature and grace form in him an example to the man and the christian. He accomplished in his blessed life, what all the philosophers in the world could never do, namely, to exhibit to the world a perfect system of religion and morals. The philosophers had discovered much truth, and wrote many excellent things on virtue and morals ; but their discoveries were detached fragments, and not an entire whole. Lactantius says, that the philosophers, taken all

together, had discovered in some good degree, all the doctrines of true religion; but, not being agreed with each other, nor able to reduce their discoveries into one consistent system, the several truths were scattered and dispersed; they were, therefore, unable to maintain and defend what they had discovered; they were unable to comprehend the entire scheme of divine religion, notwithstanding that they discovered singly, almost all the particulars of which the whole scheme consists. But this was done by different men, and at different times, and in different manners; with various mixtures of errors, in what every one discovered of truth singly; and without finding the connexion of causes, and consequences, and reasons of things, from the mutual dependences of which, the completeness and perfection of the whole scheme arises.

Whereas, had there been any man who could have collected, and put together in order, all the several truths which were taught singly and scatteredly by the different sects, and have made up out of them one entire system; truly he would not have differed much from us christians. But this, he says, was not possible for any man to do, without having the true system of things first revealed to him. The Lord Jesus in all things had the pre-eminence; he was greater than Solomon, and all the sages and philosophers in the world, uniting in

his own blessed person, the fulness of his Godhead bodily, every grace that can recommend religion, and every virtue that can adorn humanity, are so blended in him, as to excite our admiration, and engage our love.

“When he opposed the rooted prepossessions of his countrymen, he was perfectly exempt from the captious petulance of a controversialist, and the undistinguishing zeal of an innovator. His courage was active in encountering the dangers to which he was exposed, and passive under the aggravated calamities which the malice of his foes heaped upon him; his fortitude was remote from every appearance of rashness, and his patience was exempt from the least inattention.

“Though possessed of the most unbounded power, we behold him living continually in a state of humiliation and poverty; we see him almost daily exposed to every species of want and distress—afflicted, forsaken, and persecuted, and wandering about, because he had no where to lay his head.

“Every one of his eminent virtues is regulated by consummate prudence; and he both wins the love of his friends, and extorts the approbation and wonder of his enemies. Never was a character at the same time so resplendent and pleasing, so amiable and venerable. There is a peculiar contrast in it, between an awful greatness, and the most lovely tenderness. Let us pause an instant, and fill our

minds with the idea of one who knew all things, heavenly and earthly ; searched and laid open the inmost recesses of the heart ; rectified every prejudice, and removed every mistake of a moral and religious kind ; and by a word exercised a sovereignty over all nature, penetrated the hidden events of futurity, gave promises of admission into a happy immortality ; had the keys of life and death ; claimed an union with the Father ; and yet was pious, mild, gentle, humble, affable, social, benevolent, friendly, and affectionate. Such a character is fairer than the morning star. Each separate virtue is made stronger by opposition and contrast ; and the union of so many virtues, form a brightness which fitly represents the glory of that God, who dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory."

"Virtue is a term used by moralists, metaphysicians, and theologians, and an honourable place assigned it by each, though defined with some little variation. Virtue is the conformity to a rule of life, directing the actions of all rational creatures, with respect to the happiness of each other ; to which conformity every one in all cases is obliged : and every one that does so conform, is or ought to be approved of, esteemed and loved for so doing. What is here expressed, I believe every one, or most, comprise in their ideas of virtue."

Virtue generally implies some relation to others ; where self is only concerned, a man is called pru-

dent, not virtuous, and actions relating immediately to God, are styled religious. Virtue is supposed always to imply obligation and approbation. Our natural obligations arise from our perceiving the natural consequences of things, that is, the fitness or unfitness of things, acting according to the fixed laws of nature, which may be called natural obligation. That arising from merit or demerit, as producing the esteem and favour of our fellow creatures, or the contrary, is usually styled virtuous. A full and complete obligation, however, which extends to all cases, can only arise from the authority of God; because God only can, in all cases, make a man happy or miserable: and therefore our obligation to conform to the laws of virtue is from God, and the rule or criterion of it the will of God. As the Great Parent could have no other design in creating mankind, than their happiness, consequently the means of their happiness; but lest the happiness designed, should be invaded by the creatures themselves, he guards their right by just and equal laws; a conformity to which, arising from love to God and our neighbour, is native virtue. The happiness of men being the will of God revealed, whatever, therefore, tends not to make mankind happy, must be a violation of the law of God, and contrary to virtue. This may be known from the natural relations of things, or their rational fitness or unfitness. Some actions produce pleasure, others pain; some are convenient, others inconve-

nient for society ; some are for the good of mankind, others injurious to it ; those, therefore, are to be chosen, which tend to the good of mankind, and the others to be avoided. A virtuous disposition accords with the will of God, in promoting the happiness of mankind, by avoiding what would injure them in word or deed, and by a kind disposition, pursue a conduct directly tending to promote the benefit and lasting good of mankind. For whatever does not flow in the channel of pure benevolence and virtue must be vice ; there is no medium ; every thought as it rises in the breast is stamped with the seal of virtue or with that of vice.

The deputed lawful judge of the fitness and unfitness of things is reason ; and when it judges of things as they are, it is called right reason ; when reason expresses by outward signs the relations of things as they really are, it is called truth ; and hence we are apt to talk of the truth as well as the reason of things. A virtuous disposition is subject to the law of reason and the judgment of truth ; but vice being a contrary disposition, is subject to neither. Vice is therefore condemned, as being contrary both to reason and the proper nature of man. Virtue is moreover said to be an intellectual power or energy of the soul, and in every action pursues what is absolutely and simply the best.

Mere habits of virtue, although pleasing, are less commanding than the flowing energy of that living fire which animates and ennobles the

mind, inclines us to the love of truth and of knowledge ; it gives delight in pressing after higher attainments in virtue. Such a disposition irresistably moves and invigorates men to good and honourable actions ; such actions being always understood to be according to right reason, which is as a law in man—a copy or transcript of that reason or law eternal, the image of the divine mind. This law, however, is not by nature made otherwise known unto us, than as it is communicated and reflected on our minds by the exercise of right reason, and so brought to shine by reflection ; and in proportion as it shines forth, by so much doth it oblige the conscience, even as a law divine, inscribed on our hearts. Virtue is not merely a cold performance of what is equal, just, and equitable ; but a doing of what is right with cheerfulness and life, impressing obligation by the manner, as well as by the act of justice or kindness.

The very height of virtue is constantly to pursue that which to right reason seems the best ; right reason in man being consonant to divine reason, which does nothing partially, for the sake of this or that base or selfish purpose ; but generally, like an impartial parent, according to those laws which tend in their nature to the happiness of all mankind. Hence a great philosopher speaks of God as giving a divine, impartial, and eternal law, as regarding every way with equal benignity. According to this view, the Pythagorians and Stoicks held, that to follow God or

to follow nature, was just the same thing as to follow right reason; for this alone is that which constitutes our nature, and distinguishes a man from a beast. Right reason governs a virtuous, or in other words, a restored human nature, which is man's proper nature. But alas! how very few are so governed? Yet a true human nature is both subject to right reason, and conformed to the divine law; and the man who is not so restored is still at least so far a slave of vice, sin, and folly.

Viewing virtue, therefore, in comparison, as the genial warmth of a fertile soil, I shall proceed to describe some of those plants of righteousness which we should carefully plant and water,—may God give the increase! The cardinal virtues are *justice*, *prudence*, *temperance*, and *fortitude*. If theological graces, and the moral virtues, are sanctioned by one law, and given to one end, they may be inculcated by arguments, drawn both from nature and grace, without confounding their distinction or relations. Lamenting, as we may, for a moment, that we have had such kinds of religion at times as were very unfavourable to morals, and morals no less dishonourable to reason. If the very existence of a soil for morals be denied or uncultivated to make way for strange systems of theory which have learned to accuse and despise honest human nature, professing a holiness which scorns it. No wonder then, if nature should in return neglect such, and leave them, as they seem to desire a re-

ligion unconnected with nature, and destitute of either reason or truth, consequently an unnatural religion, for what are cold dry systems of notions, where neither sympathy nor society have their native liberties, but an unnatural religion.

Justice is one of those principal virtues, which are termed derivative, and is well defined by the lawyers to be *constans et perpetua voluntas suum cuique tribuendi*—a constant and perpetual will to give every man his own. And to this sense the learned also conform.—So that this virtue looks chiefly abroad, and it is therefore properly called, by the same class, the good of another; and especially if you regard that branch of it which comprehends our duty towards our neighbour. That which, in this definition, is called *suum*, or a man's own, is by the lawyers termed *jus*, or right; and they say every thing is truly so stiled, which, by a sort of fit and congruous habitude (that is, by custom sanction, or constitution) appertains to any man. Now, this habitude or title to property, takes its rise from something founded in the person to whom such right is owing or accrues, whether it be by some quality or action; for he who has gotten any thing by lawful industry has a right to keep it; and the same if it come to him by donation, or any other lawful way. Andronicus Rhodius, in his Commentary, says, “In those things the right is placed in which the law is also placed; for law and judgment is that which separates and discri-

minates right from wrong, and just from unjust. However, all law is not of one and the same nature, so neither is all right; for there is right natural, and right legal; and there is also law natural, and law positive. The first produceth those sanctions, which are immoveable and permanent; as from the latter, come such as are temporary or mutable.

The law of nature Cicero very ably describes in his first book, *de Legibus*. "Let us, (says he) for determining and constituting of right, take our beginning from the supreme law, which did in all ages subsist, both before any law was written, or any city or society of men were in being. That man who partakes of the divine nature, (as he owns our souls to do,) should be governed and directed by the laws of God, by his reason, mind, power, and influence; in this he discovers and reveals unto us the fountain and original from whence proceeds the best and the most perfect law of all. For what, (says he) either among men below, or in heaven above, or in earth, can be more divine than reason? This is the faculty which, being matured, and brought to its perfection, is by a more exalted nature, called true sapience. Wherefore, (says he,) since nothing is preferable to this reason, which is conspicuous in the image of God in man, we may conclude, that it was reason that made the first bond of society between God and man. And this bond being a law, we may presume that men are con-

sociated both to God and angels by law. By which he plainly intimates, that this supreme law, which was referable to heaven and earth, was right reason: and from thence infers a similitude between God and man." Exactly agreeing with revelation, "*In the image of God created he them.*" And in his second book, where he describes this natural law, he calls it reason, which resulteth from the nature of things, and which did not then begin to be a law when it was first written, but when it first had a being, and that it had being from eternity in the divine will. So that that law which is eminent, and truly such, fit to command, and fit to restrain, is the right reason of God himself.

The truth is, all men do agree that the supreme law is right reason; and this reason also being divine, it is therefore immutable, always constant like him whose image it is. But when it is placed in so mutable a subject as human nature is, we see sometimes how this reason is not only altered, but destroyed and extinguished. But in God, and among the blessed spirits, whether in earth or heaven, this reason flourishes and grows everlastingly. There is therefore a law which is eternal and immutable, namely, the divine reason of God, which, although it enters not into the minds of men wholly vitiated and profligate, yet still is present with the wise and prudent, and clearly manifest to them. It is from this immutable and supreme law, that all our laws and ordinances are

drawn, even those which are termed mutable, and which would have no validity in them, unless by virtue of that high and external law; and of this kind, the keeping faith in contracts, is a principal part; wherefore, as every man is bound to stand to his promise or compact; he is tied to those ordinances, which are not such by nature, but by law, because he has bound himself.

Prudence is the first primitive virtue, by which the soul exercises dominion over the passions, properly so called, as well as over all our words and actions, suiting them according to the circumstances of time and place, according to the rules of right reason. Cicero thus defines it: "*Est rerum expetendarum fugiendarum scientia.*" "The knowledge of what is to be desired or avoided." Prudence is an ability, according to inward sense and feeling, of judging what is best in the choice both of ends and means. Mason describes it as a conformity to the rules of right reason, truth, and decency at all times. It differs from wisdom only in degree; wisdom being nothing more than a consummate habit of prudence, and prudence a lower degree or weaker habit of wisdom. Christian prudence consults our whole existence to be safe;" receives counsel from heaven, and despises not the glad tidings of the gospel. Moral prudence has for its end, peace and satisfaction of mind in this world, and the prospect of happiness after

death. The idea of prudence includes due consultation, viz. concerning such things as demand consultation in a right manner, and for a competent time ; that the resolution taken up may be neither too precipitate nor too slow ; and a faculty discerning proper means when they occur. To the perfection of prudence, these three things are farther required ; viz. a natural sagacity ; presence of mind, or a ready turn of thought and experience.

Plato styles prudence the leading virtue ; and Cicero observes, “ that not one of the virtues can want prudence ;” which is most certainly true, since without prudence to guide them, piety would degenerate into superstition, zeal into bigotry, temperance into austerity, courage into rashness, and justice itself into folly. If moral virtue be nothing else but a habit of attending to the fittest time to act, or at least rest, and of finding the proper medium which in acting or in suffering is to be wished for, who but the prudent man can rightly discern that point ? Prudence therefore is a sort of general perfection of the rational part of the soul, keeping the mind undisturbed, that the rays of reason might be reflected more clearly.

Temperance is that virtue which a man is said to possess, who moderates and restrains his appetites, The influence that our food has upon our health, its tendency to preserve, or to impair our constitution, is the measure of temperance or excess. He is the temperate man, whose health directs his

appetite ; who is best pleased with what is most convenient and nourishing ; who eats not merely to gratify his taste, but to preserve his life ; who, when he feasts, is not cloyed ; who can see all the delicacies of the table before him, yet preserves a due abstinence in the midst of them.

We have a letter remaining of an heathen, who was one of the most eminent persons in an age distinguished by the great men it produced, in which he expresses how uneasy it made him, to be among those who placed no small part of their happiness in an elegant table, and who filled themselves *twice* a-day.

Life, as we have been wisely taught to consider it, “ is more than meat.” Man could not be sent into this world, but for quite different purposes, than merely to indulge his palate. He has an understanding given him, which he may greatly improve ; many are the perfections he is qualified to attain ; much good to his fellow-creatures he has abilities to do ; and all this may be truly said of all mankind ; all of us may improve our reason,—may proceed in virtue, and be many ways useful to our fellow-creatures. There are none, therefore, to whom it is not the foulest reproach, if that their belly is their god ; that they are more solicitous to favour, and thereby to strengthen the importunity of their appetite, than to weaken and master it, by frequent resistance and restraint. The reasonable being is to be always under the in-

fluence of reason : it is his excellency, his prerogative to be so ; whatever is a hindrance to this, degrades him, reflects on him disgrace and contempt. And as our reason and appetite should be regulated by the proper limits of each other, there is no indulging the latter unduly, without lessening the power of the former ; if our appetite is not governed by, it will govern our reason, and make its most prudent suggestions, its wisest counsels, to be unheeded and slighted.

The fewer the wants of any being are, we must consider it as so much the more perfect ; since thereby it is less dependent, and has less of its happiness within itself. When we raise our thoughts to the beings above us, we cannot but attribute to the higher orders of them, still farther removes from our weakness and indigence, till we reach God himself, who is exempt from wants of every kind. Knowing, therefore, what must be ascribed to natures superior to ours, we cannot be ignorant, what is our best recommendation ; by what our nature is raised ; wherein its worth is distinguished. To be without wants is the prerogative of deity ; our praise is, that we add not to the number of those to which we were appointed ; that we have none which we can avoid, and that we have none from our misconduct. In this we attain the utmost degree of perfection within our reach. On the other hand, when fancy has multiplied our necessities, when we owe, I know not how

many to ourselves ; when our ease is made dependent on delicacies, to which our Maker never subjected it ; when the cravings of our luxury bear no proportion to those of our natural appetite, what a degenerate race do we become ! what do we, but sink our rank in the creation ? He is below any brute, who, by indulging himself, has contracted wants from which nature has exempted him ; who must be made hungry by art, must have his food undergo the most unwholesome preparations, before he can be inclined to taste it. A part this, which, when acted by him who has reason, reflection, and foresight given him, wants a name to represent it in the full of its deformity. With privileges so far beyond those of the creatures below us, how great is our baseness, our guilt, if those endowments are so far abused, that they serve us but to find out the means of more grossly corrupting ourselves !

Let it be also observed, as an additional argument, that nothing is more carefully avoided, in a well-bred company, nothing would be thought by them more brutal and rude, than any marks of our having ate intemperately, viz. having exceeded that proportion of food, which is proper for our nourishment. As the luxury of mankind encreased, their lives shortened : the half of Abraham's age, became regarded as a stretch beyond the customary period. So in profane history we find, that when the arts of luxury were unknown in Rome, its

seven kings reigned a longer time than afterwards, upon the prevalency of those arts, was completed by its twenty emperors. Such persons among the ancients, whose precepts and practice most recommended temperance in diet, were eminent instances of the benefit accruing from it, in the health preserved, and long life attained by it. Gorgias lived 107 years. Hippocrates, according to some writers, reached his 104th year, according to others, his 109th. Pythagoras, of whom it was observed, that he was never known to eat to satiety, lived to near 100 years. Out of his school came Empedocles, who lived, as some say to 109; and Zenophilus, who lived to above 105. Zeno lived to 98: his disciple and successor Cleanthus, to 99. Diogenes when he died, was about 90. Plato reached his 81st year; and his follower Xenocritus, his 94th. Lycurgus, the lawgiver of the Lacedæmonians, who, when they obeyed his laws, were not less distinguished by their abstemiousness, than by their fortitude, lived to 85; and their king Agesilaus took pay of Tachos at 80; afterwards assisted Nectanebus, and having established him in his kingdom, died, in his return to Sparta, at 84. Cato the censor, is introduced by Tully, representing himself, as when in his 84th year, able to assist in the senate; to speak to the assembly of the people; and to give his friends and dependants, the help which they might want from him.

Martha Waterhouse, of the township of North

Bierly in Yorkshire, died about the year 1711, in the 104th year of her age; her maiden sister, Hester Jager, of the same place, died in 1713, in the 107th year of her age. Dr Harvey, in his anatomical account of Thomas Parr, who died in the 153d year of his age, says, that if he had not changed his diet and air, he might perhaps have lived a good while longer. His diet was old cheese, milk, coarse bread, small beer, and whey. Dr T. Robinson says of H. Jenkins the fisherman, who lived 169 years, that his diet was coarse and sour. Buchanan speaks of a fisherman in his own time, who married at 100, went out in his little fishing boat in the roughest weather, at 140, and at last did not die of any painful distempér, but merely worn out by age. Plutarch mentions the British in his time, growing old at 120; and Diodorus Siculus tells us, that their diet was simple, and that they were utter strangers to the delicate fare of the wealthy. In our several neighbourhoods, we all may see, that they who least consult their appetite, attain generally to years far exceeding theirs, who deny themselves nothing they can relish, and conveniently procure.

Human life being exposed to so many thousand accidents, its end being hastened by such a prodigious variety of ways, there is no care we can take of ourselves, in any one respect, that will be our effectual preservative; but allowing for casualties, and differences in constitutions, we every where

perceive, that the age of those who neglect the rules of temperance, is of a much shorter date than theirs, by whom these rules are carefully followed; and if we attend to our structure, it must thence be evident that it cannot be otherwise.

“Temperance,” says Addison, “has those particular advantages, above all other means of health, that it may be practised by all ranks and conditions, at any season, or in any place. It is a kind of regimen into which every man may put himself, without interruption to business, expense of money, or loss of time. Physic, for the most part, is nothing else but the substitute for exercise or temperance. In order to obtain this virtue of temperance, we should consider that it is a divine command.—“*Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your heart be charged with surfiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come on you unawares,*” Luke xxi. 34.

Fortitude and temperance agree in this, that they relate more immediately to ourselves, yet not exclusive of the happiness of others; for every virtue redounds in some way to the good of our neighbour, and hence it is styled universal justice. It is justice in the cause of truth, to turn every virtue to the advantage of others. The man of fortitude must be of a steady and courageous mind, not to be easily shaken at cross events; and should be always consistent with himself, never fall from his character, nor shew confusion in supporting it, but

with presence of mind, direct his conduct according to right reason.

Fortitude is generally considered the same with courage, though in a more accurate sense they seem to be distinguishable. Courage resists danger; fortitude supports pain. Courage may be a *virtue* or a *vice*, according to the circumstances. Fortitude is always a virtue. We speak of desperate courage, but not of deperate fortitude. A contempt or neglect of dangers may be called courage, but fortitude is the virtue of a rational and considerate mind, and is founded both in sense of honour and a regard to duty. These four cardinal virtues, which were the foundation of heathen morals, are so fully inculcated in the gospel precepts, and sanctioned by its authority, that we may recognize them as pure gospel principles, and obligatory on us, both as men and as christians.

Christian fortitude may be defined, that state of mind which arises from trust and confidence in God; enables us to stand collected and undisturbed in the time of difficulty and danger, and is at an equal distance from rashness on the one hand, and cowardice on the other. Fortitude takes different names, according as it acts in opposition to different evils; but some of those names are applied with considerable latitude.

With respect to danger in general, fortitude has been called *intrepidity*; with respect to the dangers of war, valour; with respect to pain of body,

or distress of mind, *patience* ; with respect to labour, activity ; with respect to injury, forbearance ; and with regard to our condition in general, magnanimity. The valiant in the cause of truth, moves steadily towards a glorious death. Christian fortitude springs from another source than the barbarous rage of worldly men, who, as St James says, “lust and have not ; who kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain,” James iv. 2. Those who fight for their sinful lust, differ decidedly from those who are valiant for the truth. Christians require fortitude, because they are called to fight the good fight of faith ; but then they can say, “*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin.*” Christian fortitude is necessary to vigilance, patience, self-denial, and perseverance ; and is requisite under affliction, temptation, persecution, desertion, and death. The noble cause in which the Christian is engaged—the glorious Master which he serves—the provision which is made for his security—the illustrious example set before him—the approbation of a good conscience—and the grand prospect he has in view, are all powerful motives to the exercise of fortitude.

Faith. The apostle sums up the Christian graces into three, namely, faith, hope, and charity, which last he calls the greatest of the three. Of many definitions given to faith, I know of none more expressive than that one by Paul, in the eleventh chap-

ter to the Hebrews, where he tells us, that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," verse 1. The things hoped for by a believer, are the good things which God has promised, through the Lord Jesus Christ. The promises are all full of comfort, and are all yea and amen in Christ. There is every blessing promised, yet the medium through which they are promised, tries the confidence of professors, whether their faith be soundly genuine or not; for they are held out in a way which mortifies the proud and lofty notions which we have of ourselves, and lays in the dust every scheme of worldly wisdom. The great promises made to Abraham, were made through the medium of an Isaac,—which promise he believed. Although Isaac was not given until Abraham was old, and no visible hopes were left of any earthly kind, that he, by trusting alone in the promise of God, might walk by faith, and not by sight; and even when his promised Isaac was given, and had grown up to man's estate, God required him again. "By faith, we are told, that Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

The apostle, speaking of this in his epistle to the Romans, says, that Abraham against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many na-

tions, according to the promise of God, Gen. xv. 5. "*So shall thy seed be.*"—And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. But death, the alarming medium through which the promises were made in Christ, staggered even the apostles themselves, for they all forsook him and fled; and the two disciples going to Emaus, were probably on their way to their own country, supposing their hopes of a Messiah to be buried in his grave; until a risen Saviour revived their hopes; by entering into conversation with them, opened the scriptures concerning himself, shewing them that, according to them, Christ must first suffer, and then enter into his glory.

But to return—faith, the substance of things hoped for, is that gift, faculty, or power, by which the mind sees and believes the things which God hath promised, and, relying on his wisdom, veracity, and power, expects the accomplishment of every promise which God hath made, because he hath spoken it; and the blessed consequence is, that the promised and expected blessings are received by the believer, and realized by the author and finisher of faith, as far, and as fully, as it is suited to the present state of believers; that is, as far as

they can bear, consistent with the improvement of their other graces. The things hoped for, are the good things promised, and faith is the substance of that hope, and the promises of God are the support of faith, and his truth the foundation and support of his promises, which are all, yea, and amen in Christ Jesus. Faith is his gift, and a persuasion of the truth wrought in the believing mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, whom the Lord has promised to send, in order to convince the world of sin, the sin of unbelief, because they believe not on Jesus: He opens the eyes of the mind to see the hope of our calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, "*according to the working of his mighty power,*" Eph. i. 19.

Faith is not reckoned among the moral virtues, it being of a nature superior, though not contrary to them; neither is it produced by reason, as a cause produces an effect, nor is it the effort, but repose of reason—a super-additional gift bestowed on man, and becomes a medium through which the spirit aids the believing soul in its more clear and delightful discoveries of the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, in the work of our salvation. Faith, according to Locke "is a firm assent of the mind, regulated according to good reason, and so not opposite to faith; for he that believes without reason, neither seeks truth as he ought, nor pays

the obedience due to his Maker, who would have him use the faculties given him, to keep him out of mistake and error."

Astronomers use good telescopes for discerning distant objects more clearly, not in opposition or neglect of their sight or other faculties, but in aid of them; in like manner, faith enables us to discern those things which are the proper objects of faith, and which the naked eye of sense or reason is not able stedfastly to behold.

For as the apostle reasons, "how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (of God.) For able ministers of the New Testament, must be such, not merely of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, (even of the New Testament) but the Spirit giveth life," 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Some have described faith as the mere assent of the mind to the declared truths of the Gospel revelation, supposing the mere words of truth to be the gospel, and an assent to them or belief of them faith. But when faith is tried by the criterion of genuine obedience, it will be found, that that faith which is without works is dead, viz. is not the faith of the operation of the Spirit of God. Paul declares that God sent him to preach, not with wisdom of words (merely), but in demonstration of the spirit and of power," 1 Cor. i. 17. and ii. 4. Now the genuineness of faith is tried by the fol-

lowing marks. It is united with, and works by divine love, Gal. v. 6. "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." It receives the truth in such wise as to purify the heart, and overcome the world. *And put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith,*" Acts xv. 9.—"And who is he, (saith John) that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John v. 5. and 4. The Greek word Πίστις, *pistis*, translated faith, comes from the Greek word Πειθω, *peitho*, which signifies to persuade or convince. The nature of faith is a persuasion and assent of the mind, arising from testimony or evidence. What we believe is the persuasion of our minds; and that which persuades, or convinces our mind, is evidence of some kind. God's revealed will is the matter of faith, or the thing to be believed, and the whole Scripture revelation is the revealed word or will of God, the belief of which is faith, when the conviction of the truth, and persuasive power and evidence of it is of the Holy Spirit of God. My faith means what I believe; what I believe may be true before I believe it; but it is not my faith before I believe it. The gospel does not become truth upon believing it, for it is the same truth before and after the believing of it. But it will not be the faith of any one until he believes it. Some

writers have conceived faith to be the act of believing, and no more, from that text in Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth in him, that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith* is counted for righteousness;" and have thought that the act of faith was imputed to him for righteousness, or justification. This is a great mistake, for sinners are neither justified for their own believing, nor obedience, nor for both together; neither for the truth, or sincerity, or soundness of their believing; nor for any thing they have done, or can do. For this would be to put the act of faith for the object of it. It is said the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the object of the believer's faith, is made of God to them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. Therefore, when it is said, his faith is counted for righteousness, we are to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of his faith, which he receives as the end of the law for righteousness to him, as he is to every one that believeth,—a place which we could never assign to any acts of our own. A similar mistake has been made by those who thought that Peter was the *rock* confessed, while he was only the rock confessing, and Christ the Rock confessed. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock (which thou hast confessed) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Our salvation is by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; "*not of works, lest*

any man should boast." But if we pervert the proper exercise of faith, and conceive it to be the mere acting of faith, viz. to make it a work instead of an entire reliance on the Lord Jesus, not a presumptuous reliance; nor disobedience but faith, ceasing from our own works (in point of dependence) as he did from his; we greatly err in our views, and mistake the true nature of faith. The Greek word ὑποστασις, *hypostasis*, translated *substance*, and on the margin, *ground* or *confidence*, is used to signify something that is real and exists, in contradiction to what is chimerical, or an idle fancy. The most holy faith, or the gospel, is a reality, yea the very truth of God, who cannot lie. It is not an idle fancy or a delusion; it is no deceit or error, no cunningly devised fable, 2 Pet. i. 16. It is not an artificial scheme of religion, invented or contrived by men or devils, but the truth of the living God; for He is the author and the finisher of the christian faith. But the word *hypostasis*, signifies substance, or that which is put and stands under another thing, and supports it, being its base, ground, or foundation; every building must have a foundation, but the foundation stands under the building and supports it; if the foundation fail, the building must fall. A house that is built upon firm and sure ground, or a rock, hath a good foundation; but a house that is built upon loose and rotten earth, hath a precarious foundation. 'Tis hazardous, and uncertain whether the house will

stand ; but the word *hypostasis* denotes also stability and firmness ; that which stands under, and is sufficient and able to support what is upon it. The most holy faith of the gospel, is a real, safe, firm and sure foundation of things hoped for. Faith therefore is the foundation of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Whatever then is the ground or support of hope, that is the faith, the thing believed in, or the matter depended on.

As the laws of nature and of nations, are made the ground of hope between one nation and another ; particularly the treaties of peace and commerce—the alliance offensive, and defensive, which have been solemnly and formally made and ratified by those nations ; to observe these strictly, is called keeping good faith ; to break these, is called breach of faith.

Now the laws and treaties are the things believed in, the evidence of what is not seen, and the ground upon which people venture and trust in their intercourses. Again, what is the ground of hope to those who lend money to the government, that both principal and interest may be perfectly secure ? I answer, the laws of the nation. People believe and confide in the sanction of the laws made by the authority of king and parliament. The laws are the ground of hope to the people, and the evidence of things not seen , “ Wherefore, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is

greater," 1 John v. 6. Again, supposing two or three honest neighbours come and relate to me some good and interesting news; upon their testimony and evidence I believe it; it becomes the ground of hope to me, and the evidence of what I had not seen.

Upon the authority of good historians, we believe matters of fact done long ago; their testimony is to us the evidence of things not seen.—Upon the evidence of credible witnesses, causes are determined in courts of judicature; the testimony of the witnesses is to the judge and jury, the evidence of what they themselves have not seen or heard; this is human and moral proof, and this is human faith.

Hope is that pleasure which arises in the mind on the expectation of some future good, attended with at least the possibility of attaining it, and is enlivened with joy, more or less according to the possibility there is of enjoying the object of our hope. Of all the passions, Hope is the most natural to man; and considering the many troubles and trials he is encompassed with in this mortal state, none is more necessary; for life void of hope would be heavy and spiritless, if not intolerable. But hope, the balm of human life, infuses, by its numerous cheering rays, strength into the mind, which not only lessens the burden, but makes life desirable.

Many men, by their earnestness in looking for-

ward, may be said to live in futurity ; to such it will be a cheerful companion ; for, as Pope says,

“ Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.”

“ Hope of all passions most befriends us here ;
Passions of prouder name befriend us less :
Joy has her exit—Transport has her death—
Hope, like a cordial, innocent though strong,
At once man’s heart inspires and serenes,
Like th’ mild summer’s evening, soft and sweet.
’Tis man’s full hope, his paradise below.”

YOUNG.

The Christian hope is an expectation of all necessary good things, both in time and in eternity, founded on the promises and tender relations of a reconciled Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a spring of purity in the Christian breast ; for every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure, John iii. 3. And is a resident in that heart which is cleansed from sin. It is called good in distinction from the hope of the hypocrite, which is said to perish—whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be as a spider’s web, Job viii. 14. Whereas the Christian has a good hope, through faith—one which will not make ashamed, “ *because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart, by the holy Ghost which is given unto us,*” Rom. v. 5.

It is *lively* ; “ blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (saith the apostle), which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us

again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. 3. It is *courageous*; because it animates the soul with fortitude, in all the troubles of life, and yields support in the hour of death; as saith Solomon, "the wicked are driven away in their wickedness, but the righteous hath *hope* in his death. He putteth on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the *hope* of salvation," 1 Thess. v. 8. It is *sure*; because it will not disappoint us, and is fixed on a sure foundation. It is *joyful*; as it produces the greatest felicity in the anticipation of complete deliverance from all evil; for the Christian's hope is an anchor within the vail," Heb. vi. 19.

Every man's hope is of the same kind with his faith; for faith is the ground of hope; consequently if any man's faith be false, his hope is vain; but if his faith be true, his hope is sure. Although there are many opinions, and forms of worship, it is worthy of observation, that one only is recognized as the true one, by the holy Scriptures: the same opinion has obtained, and attached many to their favourite sects. There is one *body*, one *Spirit*, one *hope*, one *Lord*, one *faith*, one *baptism*, "He that believes is justified, and he that is justified hath peace with God, and is begotten again to a lively hope. As that faith is dead which doth not bring forth good works; so also is that hope dead, that is not followed, less or more, with joy and peace, and the hope of salvation, the hope of eter-

nal life, the hope of glory. For this is the true hope of the gospel; and the faith and hope of the gospel are necessary and inseparably connected together. But then it must be remembered, that faith is in order before hope; for the faith of the gospel is the ground and support of the hope of the gospel.

Charity or Love.—We are told by the apostle John, speaking of the divine essence, that *God is love*, and by virtue of his divine nature, approves whatever is pure, reasonable, and holy in his creatures, and must be opposed to whatever is contrary to these, from the unchangeable purity and excellence of his divine nature; for what is contrary to his nature will be contrary to their happiness. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be,” Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is that sinful habit which has been formed by the pursuit of selfish and fleshly pleasures, a disposition of mind directly contrary to the spirit of true obedience and cross-bearing, which God enjoins as essentially necessary for the crucifying of the flesh, with its sinful affections and lusts. In reading the Scriptures, the word *flesh* is taken in different senses; sometimes in a good sense, and at other times in a bad one.—In a good sense, when it is pure, and found in obedience to the spiritual powers of the mind, and its desires subject to reason and the will of God. “Wherefore (the apostle says) to be carnally minded is death:

but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is not the fleshly nature, but the fleshly or carnal mind, which is enmity against God; the governing powers being placed in the mind, the blame is attached to the accountable faculties, when they transgress, and not to the pure physical nature.

Again, the word *flesh* is good or bad, according to the appropriation of the physical powers; for if employed in the service of God, they are good; but if in the service of sin, they become evil. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, (saith the apostle) that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

The angels who fell, are reserved in chains of darkness unto judgment, and fallen man is under sentence of death; believing man only has the promise of being restored by the power of regenerating grace; but the carnal mind, being enmity, cannot be subjected to the holy law, because of the contrariety of its nature, and therefore must be put off and crucified. The will and affections being redeemed in the believer, a proof of their obedient subjection to God, being manifest by their crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; the sins and sinful habits are crucified in judgment, viz. the sinful and carnal habits of the unrenewed mind; while the new man, which is renewed after the image of

him who created him, is found obedient, and can, by faith, approach God *“with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed as with pure water;”* Heb. x. 22. Such will have a single eye, the whole body being full of light: but where the heart is divided between two masters of contrary dispositions, it is impossible to serve them both. The mind must be brought to a decided willingness to give up sin, to have it destroyed, as it is an enmity which refuses the government of Christ, and consequently must be brought, according to the command of the Lord, and be slain before him: *for what fellowship hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16.

“For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Therefore, if the earthly temple was to be kept clean, and if the Lord Jesus scourged from the temple, buyers and sellers, and cast them out; how much more will he be jealous for the purity of that which is built for an eternal habitation of God, through the Spirit! Eph. ii. 21, 22. Under the law, God required purity in the worship and in the worshippers, and purity in the temple,

the place appointed for his worship. When Hezekiah reformed abuses in the Jewish worship, the Levites were commanded to "*sanctify themselves, and also the house of the Lord God of their fathers; and to carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place,*" 2 Chron. xxix. 5.

But when the people neglected the purity of God's worship, and indulged in pride and selfishness, which had entered into their minds, and drew near to God with their lips only, while their hearts went after their covetousness, the approving presence of God's glory departed from their temple and its services; for God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on sin but with abhorrence, Heb. i. 13. He takes no delight in such sacrifices as are not offered in purity of affection.

True Christian love or charity, is that pure affection which the christian feels when he delights himself in God, and performs with a single eye, his duty towards his neighbour; there is a heaven of love afforded to those who seek with all their heart a kingdom of glory. It is sin, and sin only which prevents that delight which men might otherwise have, and enjoy in the reasonable worship and service of God. It is sin that defiles the mind, when God is banished from the sinner's thoughts; and the language of their hearts is, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. The affections being corrupted, the object of pursuit and motives

to action become perverted; hence, it is said, "the plowing and sowing of the wicked is sin."

The man who regards iniquity in his heart, God will not hear his prayer; those who are, therefore, lovers of sin, cannot delight themselves in God; and it is impossible in any other way to be completely happy. God being essentially opposed to sin, it is impossible for its darkness ever to be reconciled to pure light; or for the enmity of it to coalesce with divine love; or for the deadness which it occasions, to ever unite with the life of God. Salvation from sin, with a true sense of its vileness, with a willingness to be saved in God's way, becomes absolutely necessary to our happiness and peace. "*The words of the wise, (saith Solomon) are like apples of gold set in pictures of silver.*" When holy principles, and the graces of God's Spirit, are set in the frame of a sanctified heart, very beautiful and becoming will the morals of such a person be; their fruit will be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Our love to God is from a true sense of his love to us: "We love him, (saith John,) because he first loved us;" and the rejoicing hosts in heaven, who praise him with one accord, agree with this sentiment: "Thou art worthy, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood," 1 John iv. 19. Rev. v. 9.

"Love to God is a subject," says bishop Porteous, "which it concerns us to enquire carefully into the nature of. And it concerns us the more, because it

has been unhappily brought into disrepute by the extravagant conceits of a few zealous enthusiasts concerning it. Of these, some have treated the love of God in so refined a way, and carried it to such heights of seraphic ecstasy and rapture, that common minds must for ever despair of either following or understanding them; while others have described it in such warm and indelicate terms, as are much better suited to the grossness of earthly passion, than the purity of spiritual affection.

“Too many are strangers to the love of God; ‘*I know you, (saith Jesus to the Jews,) that ye have not the love of God in you;*’ some have a more high and seraphic degree of the heavenly passion, and others less, but cannot be a christian without it in some real degree. We may observe, that although there may be many ways of expressing our love to God, who knows the spring of every action; we are more liable to mistake in expressing it towards men, who may either mistake our motive, or doubt our testimony. If our love be genuine, and flow from God, it will resemble his universal benevolence to men, by our sympathy for the distressed, complacency in the saints; it will chiefly appear in purity of manners on all occasions; seasonable acts of brotherly kindness, with a consistent observance of all the commands of God. Accidental excesses, however, can be no just argument against the general excellence and utility of it.”

Friendship has been abused to the most unwor-

thy purposes ; shall we, therefore, utterly discard that generous passion, and consider it as nothing more than the unnatural fervour of a romantic imagination? Every friendly heart revolts at so unkind a thought! and shall we suffer the love of God to be reproached, because it has sometimes been improperly represented or indiscreetly exercised? “It is not from the visionary mystic, the sensual fanatic, or the frantic zealot, but from the plain word of God, the example of Christ, and experience of his people, that we are to take our ideas of this divine passion. In the Scriptures, we find it described in all its native purity and simplicity. The marks by which it is distinguished contain nothing enthusiastic or extravagant.” It is there considered as sincere, constant, universal, superlative, eternal, Matt. xxii. 36. Rom. viii. 1 Thes. v. 12. Ephes. iii. 19. Lam. iii. 24. “Love manifests itself in a desire to be like God. In making his glory the supreme end of our actions. In relinquishing all that stands in opposition to his will,” Phil. iii. 8. 6. “In love for his truth and people,” John xiii. 35. “By confidence in his promises,” Psal. lxxi. 1. and by obedience to his word,” John xiv. 15. *If ye love me keep my commandments.* Under the dispensation of both the old and new covenants, the *end* of the command is *charity* out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned,” 1 Tim. i. 5. “Love is therefore, as,” saith the apostle, “the fulfilling of the law,” Rom.

xiii. 10. We are enjoined by the highest authority, to love our enemies, not their evil practices, but their immortal souls, their true interest. Our Lord enjoins among his followers love to each other. *A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,* John xiii. 34. It affords a variety of pleasing sensations, and prevents a thousand evils ; it is the greatest of all graces, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. It makes man resemble the inhabitants of a better world, and without it every other attainment is of no avail. This love should shew itself by praying for our brethren, bearing one another's burdens, by assisting and relieving each other, Gal. vi. 2. By mutual forbearance. Col. iii. 13. By reproof, and admonishing in the spirit of meekness, Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. By establishing each other in the truth, by conversation, exhortation, provoking each other to love and good works, in the several relative duties of religion and morals.

Humility is a christian grace, directly opposite to pride ; it is a disposition of mind, which gives a man a lowly opinion of himself, not vain, nor lifted up, but decent, and becoming his station, and proper character ; of which every man may be supposed to have four, one which he has in the opinion of his enemies, another in the judgment of his friends ; a third perhaps he forms of himself, something different from the others ; and a fourth which

is the character he has in the sight of God. Humility is the best disposition of mind, whether we regard our own peace, friendship, or the worship of God; "*For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones,*" Isa. lvii. 15.

The heathen philosophers were so little acquainted with this virtue, that they had no name for it; what they meant by the word which we use, was meanness and baseness of mind. But the great Teacher of morals and religion, in opposition to the pride and folly of the world, teaches humility, in order to happiness and honour. "Learn of me, (saith he) for I am *meek and lowly* in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls," Matt. xi. 29. True humility appears in gentleness of manners, and goodness of disposition; by which we bear wrong, and often forego our right for peace, and out of kind regard to others. It does not, however, oblige a man to wrong the truth by speaking or thinking of himself worse than he deserves; by doing justice to others, we are not required to exclude ourselves. Nor will it always oblige a man to give every body else the preference to himself. A wise man is not required to believe himself ignorant and inferior to the multitude; nor the

virtuous man that he is not so good as those who are vicious.

Nor does it oblige a man to treat himself with contempt in his words or actions. It looks more like affectation than humility, when a man says such things in his own dispraise, as others know, or he believes to be false; and it is plain that this is often done, merely as a bait to catch praise.

The truly humble, delight themselves in God, and are not, in any concern of their own, so easily offended as the proud man; they sit like Mary at their Master's feet, and choose with her the better part which shall not be taken from them. It will express itself by modesty of conversation and behaviour, and forbids our being vainly talkative, obstinate, forward, envious, or ambitious. It is pleasing to God, who resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. It preserves the soul in great tranquillity, being a grace the most remote from pride, the never-failing cause of uneasiness and misery.

Behold it in the meek and lowly Jesus, who, being in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He was made under the law, born of a woman, in a poor country

village, with a stable for his lodging, and a manger for his cradle.

He took our nature upon him, and became liable to its sinless infirmities and griefs. Hence we read of his weariness, and pain, hunger, and thirst. He lived in obscurity for a long time, and probably worked at the trade of a carpenter; in the days of his ministry, his followers were poor fishermen, with whom he went about doing good, healing multitudes, yet not having where to lay his head; to pay a small tribute, he had to work a miracle, and by it taught us the doctrine of a special providence.

His character was loaded with reproach, and the most false accusations; and in his death, see him crowned with thorns, scourged, and clothed with a purple robe of mock royalty, and gall and vinegar given to quench his thirst. When taken to his burial, it was not from his own house, nor from any house, but from the cross; and as he was born in another man's house, so was he laid in another man's tomb; by all of which he leaves us an unspotted example of holiness and patience under sufferings.

CHAPTER V.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE WAY TO GLORY.

THE cross of Christ, in Scripture language, means the sufferings of Christ, Gal. vi. 14. The sufferings, trials, or persecutions of his people, are also called a cross, Matt. xvi. 24.

Much has been said about the cross of wood on which our Lord suffered, as has been also about many other external appendages of religion: But when Paul rejoices in it, it is not on any worldly account, superstitious purpose, shew, or appearance; but for truth's sake, on a divine account, because by it, as the instrument of suffering from the world, he became crucified to the world, and the world unto him; by which means he could live in the newness of the spirit, and in greater liberty and love in God's service, and more to his glory. Hence he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

If life and death are set before us, and eternal blessedness, or eternal misery depend on our choice, and if the time for that choice be *to-day*, very solemn and serious should our deliberations be!—Life and death are set before us; Christ with his cross precedes, heaven and its glories follow after; thousands in error around us pursuing sin and folly; these allure and invite others into sin by their foolish example; misery, death, and hell follow afterward, while the still small voice of divine wisdom whispers graciously in the ear—choose life that ye may live. “My son, (saith God) give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways,” Prov. xxiii. 26.

I came not, saith the merciful Lord, to destroy men's lives, but to save them, which he did by the sacrifice of himself, giving his life a ransom for many, and also by filling the sacred offices of prophet, priest, and king, that he might thereby not only suffer the just for the unjust, but subdue our iniquities by his power, and lead us to victory and glory, as an ensign to the nations, a light to the gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. Isaiah xlix. 6.

Let us, my dear reader, enquire, Do we believe in the Son of God? Have we taken up the cross in order to follow him to glory? Since religion has become popular, and is attended with some emolument, it has many professors: it is now in circumstances, however, very different from those days of

horror, when its friends had to pass through the flames to glory, at least as to outward things. But a cross must remain to crucify us to the world, and the world unto us; for the enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent still remains, and will, until the serpent's head be effectually and entirely bruised.

It is true that going to glory by the cross, as Jesus the forerunner of his followers hath done, and hath taught the doctrine of it to them as the *only* way to final happiness; it seems to mortals very mysterious; but the wisdom of God is in it, although our nature recoils at its own dissolution, even our Lord himself was heavy and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and said in prayer to his Father, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," Matt. xxvi. 39.

It is to be feared, those who are merely professors of religion, because custom has rendered it popular, have not sufficiently viewed it as a divine revelation of pure and inflexible laws; but rather as a system of opinions, which might be accommodated to the judgment of each party, consequently received by them severally in some of its forms, and decently supported by such modes, ceremonies, and periodical observances, as they severally may have inclined to adopt. While little experimentally has been either known or heard of a divine, sin-destroying power, graciously affecting the whole man, by transform-

ing and regenerating the heart; enabling him thereby to love God with all his powers, and his neighbour as himself. Not in the cold form of lifeless ceremonies, or hypocritical pretensions, but with sincere love, living energy, and joyful freedom, not with a heart partial, selfish, or divided, but renewed and animated with love and power, fitted by these for the reasonable service and joyful privileges of the sons of God; for they receive from him not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but of love, and of power, and a sound mind. Such a religion glorifies God and benefits mankind, it flows from the fountain of life, through a medium of mercy, realizing the promised blessing of the gospel, by producing the fruits of righteousness in the believing mind: very different from the effects produced by a mere exhibition of outward sounds and forms, which only affect the eye and ear, and leave the heart unaffected, cold, and unimpressed with either love to God, or good-will to men.

The Lord Jesus, who, having the right of redemption, being our near kinsman, assumed our human nature, and a reasonable soul,—a truth of great value; which admitting, I therefore enquire, Do we believe, that his body and soul were really such as they appeared to be, and were declared and proved to be; that his love was real, and his mission divine? Did he really leave the bosom of the Father, the worship of angels, and the glory of the heavens, to come to earth to do the Father's will, and to re-

veal his laws, and to glorify his name, and redeem his people, by fulfilling all righteousness, and after a life of spotless obedience, suffer, bleed, and die? Are we then authorised in calling his love real? was it love the purest, greatest, and most seasonable that could be imagined, far beyond the comprehension of angels or of men?

Were then his sufferings real,—his love real,—his kindness real,—and his obedience also real? These were all real, and have never been doubted by any who were capable of judging of truth and evidence. And if these were real in Christ, they will be real in his people; for as John says, "*we shall be like him*;" for he is the head, and they are the members of his body, and such a nearness will make a real likeness. 1 John iii. 2.

The law, as saith the apostle, was a shadow of good things to come; but not the very image of those things, Heb. x. 1. An important distinction is made between a shadow, and the substance; the one a faint resemblance, and the other a solid reality. The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; therefore, whatever proves the reality of Christ's human nature, and real sufferings, and final victory, will imply and prove a similar reality for his followers; because he is bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.—He is the head; they are the members.—He is the captain; they are the soldiers.—He is the master; they are the servants.—He is the elder brother; they are

the younger sons of God, to be brought to glory by their elder brother through suffering; both he who sanctifieth, and they his brethren, who are sanctified, are all one; for which cause, he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb ii. 10, 11.

This truth might have the support of a great multitude of Scripture figures; but let these suffice; and from which we may conclude, that those are greatly mistaken, who imagine that religion is merely a shadow of outward observances and formal ceremonies: for suppose we should say of these, as Paul does of the law; namely, that they are just and good; yet we must conclude with the same apostle, that they are only a shadow, which has no saving life or power. The substance is of Christ; the love, and life, the light and peace, flow from God by him.

Now, whatever attempt may be made by any person or persons, to deny the reality of religion in itself, or among those who really receive it, or substitute any other thing in the place thereof, dishonour the name of Christ, and bring reproach upon the professors of it, because they would be supposed to be making profession of nothing; for religion, unproductive of good morals, and without life or energy, is nothing, and worse than nothing, notwithstanding its fancied forms, Hosea x. 1. When our Lord explains the parable of the sower to his disciples, of the four kinds of ground on which it fell; one only was productive,

namely, a *good* and *honest heart*, the possessor of which, having heard the word, kept it, and brought forth fruit with patience, Luke viii. 15.

We are commanded to try the spirits, not to believe every spirit; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. "Such (saith John), as confess not that Christ is come in the flesh, are not of God," John iv. 1, 2, 3. Those who deny his formation in the virgin's womb, as some have done, will be ready to deny also his formation in the human heart, Col. i. 27. Gal. i. 16. Such a spirit John calls the spirit of antichrist.—"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil." The destruction of sin being the declared end of a Saviour's coming, most certainly implies, that his power must come in contact with sin, before it can be destroyed; for while he treads on the serpent's head, will his heel not be in contact with it? and while he removes our darkness by divine light, we must suppose it to be in contact with the darkness; in the same way, the counteracting power of life will recover us from death, and love from enmity, when shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto us, Rom. v. 5. The heart is the seat of war, the throne for which two powers contend—one or other must possess it; there must, therefore, be the indwelling power of the Spirit, to counteract the motions of sin; hence the admonition to

“quench not the Spirit;” and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And again, “his servants ye are, to whom ye obey,” Rom. viii. 16.

Through the powerful aid and influence of the Holy Spirit, the believer is taught and enabled to offer up his body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is his reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. “*The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise !*” Psal. li. 17. “Now, (as saith the apostle) if Christ be in you, the body is dead (under sentence of death) because of sin ; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness. For if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Rom. viii. 10. 11.

Painful as the cross may be, it is the only way to victory ; besides, it makes the suffering disciple acquainted with the fellowship of the sufferings of Him who loved us, and gave himself for us. This was one of the very chiefest blessings which the apostle Paul desired, and counted his attainments under the law while a stranger to Christ, of no account, or as waste of time. “Yea, doubtless, (saith he) and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and

be found in him ; not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith : *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death* ; if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Such was the language of an experienced sufferer—one who had tasted both the bitter cup, and the cup of consolation, and was instructed in the mysteries of the cross in the third heavens.

One of the mysteries of the cross, is the sufferings of innocence ; for persons in general suppose innocence entitled 'to honour and reward. The patient Job, when he saw the innocent suffer, as well, yea, more than the wicked, was ready to say, "What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin?" Job xxxv. 3. David was also stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of the righteous, until he went into the house of the Lord, and perceived that they stood in slippery places ; and that this life is not the place of full or final reward. Those who suffer for their sins, suffer justly, and those who suffer innocently, do it acceptably, provided they suffer with Christ believingly : "For if ye suffer for righteousness, sake (saith Peter) happy are ye ; for it is better (if the will of God be so, that ye suffer), that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. For Christ

also has once suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. And if, when you be buffeted for your faults, (saith he) and ye take it patiently, what glory is it ? but if, when ye do well, ye suffer for it, and ye take patiently, this is acceptable with God," 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, 14, 17. " For if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you ; neither think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." But he adds, " Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf," 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

When innocence suffers, it preacheth sympathy ; the very rocks rent at the time of the sufferings of Christ Jesus ; it excites commiseration with men, and moves the bowels of divine mercy with God ; for when the Lord beheld the sufferings of his people in Egypt, and heard their groaning, he says, " I am come down to deliver them." And especially our merciful High Priest, willing in all things to shew his love, was made like unto his brethren, that, being touched with the feeling of our infir-

mities, he might know how to succour them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 17, 18. The long-suffering of God with the wicked, is in order to redeem his people, being related to his creation, through his love to the human nature, and the designs of it to the temple of his glory, which he rescues from its ruins : but destroys the enmity of the carnal mind; for what communion hath light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Beilal ?

The strong enmity of the unrenewed heart to the cross of Christ, is a truth we should seriously consider. Thousands of volumes have been written to explain systems of religion, which taught other and different methods of obtaining divine favour, and getting to glory otherwise than by the cross of Christ; but none have succeeded; nor have any truly prospered, who have neglected to take up the cross, or have laid it down after having taken it up: "for no man having put his hand to the gospel plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke ix. 62. As an assignable reason, this we may say, if innocence itself shudders at death, that has no guilt to make it afraid, what dread must attend the wicked impenitent mind, who meets death armed with a sting; for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; this must shock and alarm them, and put them on expedients of invention: no wonder then, if they find out refuges of lies, and hide themselves under falsehood. But alas! many who

admit the doctrine, shun the practice ; they profess to know God, but in works they deny him ; these wound Jesus in the house of his friends. It is a doctrine alarming and shocking to our pride. Nature knows not how to submit to its own dissolution ; nor is it to be taught by the wisdom of man. It is surely a king of terrors, and was to the wise philosophers a subject of all others the most awful. The doctrine of the cross has the solemn voice of death ; for when the disciples saw that the only path-way to heaven, was by the cross, and Jesus condemned to suffer on it, they all forsook him and fled ; it was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness : but the wisdom of God, and the power of God to every one that believeth. The divine presence going with the christian through the valley and shadow of death, encourages and comforts him ; he can behold the triumphant power of his Lord over death, and say by faith in the strength of the Lord, “O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It becomes the Christian's reasonable service to be offered to God on the altar which sanctifies the gift, and daily suffer, that he may truly live ; for those who believingly, die daily with Christ, their last days labour of dying will not be very terrible. But alas ! for those who have lived in worldly pleasure on the earth, and been wanton ; who have nourished their

hearts, as in the day of slaughter ; when they are called to give an account of their lives, and cannot find in the whole, one day in which they have lived for God—terrors will seize upon them ; they will call on the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and cover them from the face of their just Judge !

Our submission to the divine will—desiring to be saved from sin's pollution, according to the doctrines of regeneration, will lead us, if truly obedient, to suffer without the camp ; for “ as many as have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,” Rom. vi. 4. “ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” We are not, therefore, to be ashamed of Christ before an ungodly world, who are enemies to the cross of Christ ; “ But go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach,” Heb. xiii. 13. Not that the Christian suffers for the sake of suffering ; but when obedience to the will of God leaves no alternative, but either to sin or suffer ; we may know the master to whom he belongs, he is not ashamed of him before men, and if a greater proof is required than testimony, he takes his lot among those who overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and loved not their lives unto death, Rev. xii. 11.

The heavenly inheritance being pure and unde-

filed, endureth for ever : our meetness to be partakers of it, becomes essentially necessary to our enjoyment of it ; for this the apostle thanks the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, Col. i. 12. As the typical sacrifices were to be innocent, whether bird or beast, so likewise typical persons, whether prophets, priests, or kings, living types of Christ, and valiant for the truth upon the earth, had to suffer ; our Lord declares, that all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the days of righteous Abel, until the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom the Jews slew between the temple and the altar, should be brought on that generation, for their cup of transgression was full, Matt. xxiii. 35. And whoever shall peruse the pages of history, may find, that the flock of Christ have been a suffering people ; “ For thy sake,” saith the psalmist, “ we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter,” Psal. xliv. 22.

The apostle takes up the subject, and says of himself, and the servants of God in general, “ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed.” “ *Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*” For we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that

the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our flesh. The apostles, martyrs, and true christians in every age, have been sufferers; for if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution; for unto them it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to *suffer* for his sake, Phil. i. 29. The apostles were charged in the most plain and solemn manner, to continue in their Redeemer's love, and the truth, as he had delivered it unto them; "As the Father hath loved me, (saith Jesus) so have I loved you: *continue ye in my love.*" "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free," John viii. 31, 32.

Our Lord's design was, to manifest truth and love to the world, by miracles and the testimony of chosen witnesses, for the salvation of men. Hence the necessity of declaring his truth in the appointed way, holding it forth in love, the witnesses themselves continuing to love one another, and guarding against sin in every form,—love of the world, and covetousness; warning them, that if the salt of his grace should lose its savour, they would become the most useless and incurable of men. Not only were they to preach the doctrines of the cross, but shew forth his death in their own example, by their deadness to the world, till he would come, 1 Cor. xi. 26. Has heaven and its glories, the cross and its pains, been the only inducements held out to the world, in order to prose-

lyte them to the faith of the Gospel? Is the Lord's death shewn in the lives of professors? Do they bear their cross, and patiently follow a despised Nazarene to glory? for although the world may alter the form or fashion of devotions, there is no new way to heaven, no other than the good old way; this truth is unchangeable, like its blessed author, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. "And he that saith he abideth in him, ought to walk even as he also walked." "Brethren, (saith John) I write no new commandment unto you: but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning." "*He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now,*" 1 John i. 6, 9.

If the death of Christ proved his love to the world, to angels, and to men,—the truth of which devils believe and tremble; what proof will men give that they belong to Christ, if they are ashamed of him, or his words, or cross, or servants, before the world? It is by love one for another, that his disciples are to be known from the societies of worldly men; not by speaking of it, but by having it, and by shewing it,—or, will it be sufficient to say, be ye warmed and be ye filled; notwithstanding, as (saith James) ye give not those things which are needful to the body? what doth it profit?" James ii. 16.

The want of proper moral evidence in the lives of professors, as also their neglecting to bear season-

able and suitable testimony to the truth, has occasioned the scorn of the infidel, and the sceptics smile; would it have been so, if all who have named the name of Christ, had departed from evil, and borne their undaunted testimony for the truth, and against evil? Had we like good old Joshua, stood resolved, that, let others do as they would, we and our houses would serve the Lord, Joshua xxiv. 15. Then should our peace have flowed as a river; and our righteousness as the waves of the sea. The zealous, loving, and undaunted manner, in which Stephen vindicated the cause of truth before he suffered, confounded the pride of the Jewish sanhedrim, who were wicked opposers of the kingdom of Jesus; and although their malice was excited, so as to cause the death of Stephen, yet, as a champion for the cause of truth, he testified it with holy boldness: While they beheld his face as the face of an angel, they gnashed on him with their teeth; but he saw the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive him; and kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and when he had said this, he fell asleep, Acts vii. 60. Although this event scattered the disciples, it encreased their boldness; they saw more clearly the cross of Christ as the only way to glory, and taking it up, resolved to follow him, and went every where preaching the *word*. They who sow in tears, shall reap in joy:

“For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations,” Isa. lxi. 11.

CHAPTER V.

 SUPERSTITION AND ENTHUSIASM.

“BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world,” 1 John iii. 1. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

“Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,” Matt. vii. 16, 21.

“And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake : and after the earthquake ■ fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a small still voice,” 1 King xix. 11, 12.

“Do this ; take of the best fruits in the land, in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds,” Gen. xliii. 11.

THE word *superstition* is from the Latin word *superstio*, and is understood to be the observance of unnecessary and uncommanded rites and practices in religion ; a shew without morality or utility,

unfounded in nature, truth, or reason. It has been supposed, that religion and morals, are as demonstrable from the perfections of Deity, as mathematical problems ; for religion coming from a God of order, we must suppose it to be an emanation of his blessed image, made known to us in the person of Christ, and taught to us by his Spirit. For the regulation of our judgments, we have a revelation of the character of God, his attributes and perfections, the law which he revealed, its exemplification in the obedience of Christ, and the scriptures containing his laws and commands ; for without the compass of his word, in such a vortex of opinions, we might be carried away from reason and truth, by the tides of error with which we are surrounded. Without a rule of judgment, men might wander into endless error ; but to prevent which, some unchangeable truths cease not to give light in the darkest night of error : the being of God is declared by his works ; they prove some first cause which has given being, beauty, and order to the whole. The scriptures of truth are a light which shine in a dark place, until the day-star arise in the heart : the evidences of their truth and authenticity, are not equalled by the most credible history in the world besides. The reason and judgment which God has given for direction in the affairs of life, not for the present only, but our whole existence, which we should exercise on the most momentous concern of all ; namely, our everlast-

ing happiness. Besides these, the Spirit of truth, who spake by the prophets, and indited the Scriptures, is promised to them who ask him ; qualifying the happy possessor to see clearly the path of duty ; for the spiritual man judgeth all things. With these blessed guides and rules of judgment, we may more easily guard against the influence of superstition or enthusiasm, which I consider nothing more or less than mistaken devotion ; for the nature being unregenerate, and yet led on to external acts of devotion, by zeal, dread, or the force of example ; the mind sinks with fear, or soars in hope. When it sinks below the line of reason, which should regulate every well-governed mind, and becomes fearful and slavish, it is in danger of superstitious devotion ; but when it ascends above the line, and soars into rapturous flights, leaving behind prudence, discretion, and sound judgment : it may be called enthusiasm, in the least excellent sense of that word. For many words have now obtained two senses, a good one, and a bad, among which, enthusiasm is sometimes taken in a good, and sometimes in a bad sense ; in its best sense, it signifies a divine *afflatus*, or inspiration, from the Greek word *entheos*, an inspired man ; from *en*, in, and *Theos*, God ; transport of the mind, whereby it is led to imagine things, in a sublime, surprising, and yet probable manner. Such enthusiasm is commended, in poetry, oratory, music, and painting. But in a reli-

gious sense, it signifies an irrational devotion, which consists in mere fancy, impressions, or agitation of the passions, for which no reasonable account can be given: whereas religion throughout is a reasonable service, which, as reasonable creatures, we are commanded to regard, and to be ready to give a reason of the hope in us, with meekness and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 15.

True zeal and real devotion may appear as enthusiasm on two accounts, for want of a rational method of communication, on the part of the professor, or unacquaintedness with lively devotion on the part of those who judge; but those who have a true and animated spirit of devotion, should be very careful to act according to the word of God, and good sense and reason, lest they prejudice those whom they may intend to edify; and they should remember, that prejudice against religion is not soon removed. And without being unkind in judgment, the persons who do not confine their zealous devotion within rational bounds, are justly chargeable with enthusiasm, at least in their manner, for the judgment of the heart belongs to God. I am satisfied, however, that a wrong spirit of devotion has a very bad effect on the minds of hearers, and it should be reproved, or avoid hearing them; because, to countenance them, is to partake of their evil deeds; and Solomon warns us to "*go from the presence of a man, when we see not the spirit of wisdom in him.*"

That the Lord allows his people to taste his love, and to enjoy fellowship with him, cannot be denied; but then, some rule of judgment is necessary to distinguish, in ourselves or others, rational devotion from enthusiasm. The criterion is supposed by many to be the holy Scriptures, which I readily grant, provided we are able to use them; but it is to be lamented, they are used professionally as the criterion of judgment by persons of opposite creeds and opinions. These cannot all be equal to judge according to the holy Scriptures; they will, I presume, require a regenerated state of nature, in order to a good temper; and the Spirit of God, who spake by the prophets, to open their understandings, and give them to discern the true and spiritual meaning of the Scriptures; for he it is that searcheth all things, even the deep things of God; and who taketh "the things of Christ and sheweth them unto us." But of the unregenerate or carnal man, it is said, that "he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them (in that unregenerate state), because they are spiritually discerned." "But we, (saith the apostle) have the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 14, 16.

Before men are capable to judge of divine things, or compare spiritual things with spiritual, they must necessarily receive from the Lord a sound mind—eyes to see—ears to hear, and hearts to un-

derstand, 2 Tim. i. 7. But this we may judge, that whatever is from God is good; and if it be, it will have the gospel's voice, and, in its tendency, proclaim with the angels, "*Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good will unto men.*" Whatever views, opinions, feelings, or impressions we may have, if they are inconsistent with reason—if they tend not to humble us—if they do not regulate our lives, and make us just, pious, and uniform, they cannot come from God, but are evidently the effusions of an enthusiastic brain. But, on the other hand, where true grace comes, the mind will be enlightened, the will renovated, and the man will cease to do evil, and learn to do well; the powers will be roused to action for promoting the divine glory, which is the salvation and true happiness of men. But to talk of the glory of God, and neglect the interest of his people, especially his lambs, is rank enthusiasm, of the worst kind. But where there is a true love of men, and peace and joy in believing, a spiritual frame of mind with a heart devoted to God, and a holy useful life; however this may be reproached as enthusiasm, let the living, loving Christian rejoice in God—it is the Spirit of the Lord, and the work of his grace with power; it will not make ashamed, for the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION.

We are taught by an inspired apostle, to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.

When men are truly concerned for their own souls, and enquire after truth, duty, and everlasting happiness, the instruction afforded by the holy Scriptures, and the example of Jesus Christ, becomes to such persons, pleasing and delightful, as good news from a far country. In the little work now put in thy hand, I hope I have endeavoured to view the Author of Christianity as the Scriptures represent him, not only as our Redeemer, by shewing the greatness of Divine love, and purity of obedience; but as our true exemplar. It is in his human nature he gives us an example; for in his divine, he is our Creator, our Judge, and our God. His appearance in human nature, according to the promises and predictions of him, restores the charter of our forfeited privileges, by visibly rescuing human nature from the bondage and misery in which the darkness of sin and man's disobedience had involved it. Not only so, but he sets before the world a perfect and spotless pattern of obedi-

ence. He shews the truth, and teaches the practice of our duty, the nature and obligation of the perfect law, in his own example of obedience, by which he vindicates its purity, magnifies and makes it honourable ; glorifies God, and brings to man his great salvation. He declares the whole economy of grace to be one great design of truth and love, revealed, that men seeing the great mercy of God, may be persuaded to believe on him, and submit to his gracious method of saving sinners, through the redemption which is in him ; his perfect obedience being pleadable before God to this effect, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. And, moreover, he came not only as a redeemer by price, but as a conqueror by power, that he might deliver his people out of the hands of their enemies, that they might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives. It appears, from the authority of many portions of Scripture, that regeneration is a primary doctrine of the gospel. Without being born again, no man can see the kingdom of God, as our Lord declares to Nicodemus. Regeneration, or the new birth, appears to be simply a washing away of sin, whether it be the filthiness of the flesh or spirit, in the fountain opened in the house of David for that purpose ; as Solomon had made for the temple service, large brazen lavers to wash or sanctify the sacrifices in, 2 Chron. iv. 6.

The true service of God implies an entire and undivided devotion of heart and life to his service, requires the sacrifice so offered to be holy, which our Lord's example fully proves, and which the apostle enjoins in the duty of offering our bodies as living sacrifices, and which of necessity must be holy, Rom. i. 12. We should carefully preserve a marked difference between the sanctification of our human nature, and the sanctification of our immortalized humanity—the word sanctification signifying to make holy; the attribute must be bounded by the subject, it is then easy to perceive the distinction we should make: the duty of sanctified obedience, in our state of regeneration, requires, plainly and scripturally speaking, our hearts to be sprinkled, viz. cleansed from an evil conscience, from unbelief and gross error; and our bodies washed with pure water from outward sins or immoralities. But a holiness suited to a divine nature, or the immortalized state of humanity, which qualifies for the highest degrees of spiritual worship here, or for the heavenly service hereafter, must necessarily be conceived to be a state of purity considerably advanced in its degree of ascent, and one necessary for heavenly felicity, being in its proportion as human is to divine. The neglect of this distinction has occasioned much disputative reasoning between perfectionists and antiperfectionists, which might have been easily avoided, by obtaining the just ideas of holiness, which properly belong to the re-

spective states of progressive sanctification ; the humanity being liable to sin and corruption ; which the divine nature is not. The first, namely, the regeneration of human nature, being accomplished by the washing of water by the word and Spirit, sanctifying our human nature for the duties incumbent upon us in obedience and sufferings ; while the second is by the Holy Ghost, and by refining fire. Between these two baptisms, should be placed the sphere of our sufferings and obedience ; the faith by which we have been actuated being tried by fire, that being found to be of God, it might be, to the praise of his glory.

The believer being decided, and his heart right with God, whatever sins he may have to contend with through his relation to the carnal mind or old man, and temptations of Satan, through the medium of these, while he wars against them, and yields not, he is denominated after the master he serves, and not after the one he has forsaken : “ for his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; ” and therefore, he cannot be the servant of two masters at once, so directly contrary. “ If any man sin, (saith John) we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.” And if he repents of his sin truly, and returns to God, he will have mercy upon him. But if a man repent not of his sin, and yet, notwithstanding, think himself a believer, and hope for heaven hereafter, without being made holy here, he deceives himself : for “ without holi-

ness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14.

Sanctified sufferings by the cross are the appointed portion of God's children, the growth and improvement of all their graces is increased thereby; it is the only way to heaven; for, by conformity to the blessed example, we are brought thereby to know the fellowship of his sufferings, the power of his resurrection, being made conformable to his death; for if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

'Tis evident our Lord did pass through sufferings to glory, Luke xxiv. 26. And in this respect his people must be like him, 1 John iii. 2. Peter prays for the saints to God, that after they had suffered a while, he would *perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle* them, 1 Pet. v. 10. Taking the words of Christ, in the plain and unequivocal language, used in the volume of inspiration, we must necessarily be changed by regenerating power, and become decided characters: for Christianity is more than theory; the restored Christian is concerned in its importance, and is in duty bound to believe the whole truth, take up his cross, and follow Christ; by neglecting of which duty, he loses the life he meant to save; while the obedient Christian, by laying down his life, gains a life which he cannot lose—a happy one, which shall never end. From which we may reason, that if there are indispensable duties and gracious privileges enjoined on all, by the command of God, requiring obe-

dience to all, we therefore conclude, that God has graciously through Christ Jesus, extended his mercy to all, and upon all who believe, for there is no difference. It is the revealed will of God, and according to the perfections of his nature, and love to man, that he should be worshipped in spirit and in truth. "*And a pure offering offered to his name from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.*" Mal. i. 11. And that, through genuine obedience, the utility of his laws, should extend their beneficial effects to all men, of whatever place or nation, where his name is recorded; for true religion includes the interest of every man, in all its precepts and commands; seeing that the Scriptures declare God to be loving to every man, and his tender mercies over all his works.

Let us, my dear reader, while on earth, in the spirit of true christian obedience, live in faith and in the holy fear of God, and in the love of man, according to the true and kind sympathies of our proper nature; bearing our cross with cheerful resignation; looking unto Jesus for the promised aids of life and light, love and power; keeping our garments clean, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. So prays your affectionate servant in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

GEORGE M'CANN.

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